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The Arena

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Health Care Arena
 An ongoing discussion on the health care debate

Jan. 19, 2010

Driving the Conversation:

Arena Ref: Fred Barbash

The message from Massachusetts

What now for the Democratic agenda?

Earlier: Dear Rahm....

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Roger Pilon
 Vice President for Legal Affairs, Cato Institute :

Listening to Scott Brown's long, barely scripted **acceptance speech** last night, you had the refreshing sense that you were listening to an ordinary American, not to some political cut-out. Here's a guy who campaigned in a pick-up truck with over 200,000 miles on the odometer, who listened to the voters and understood that they wanted not simply to block tax hikes but to lower taxes (and the last thing they wanted was for their taxes to pay terrorists' lawyers bills!), who understood that even worse than the healthcare bill now before Congress were the back-room deals that brought it about, who's served proudly for 30 years in the National Guard – in short, here's guy you'd be comfortable having a beer with because, as he said, "I know who I am and I know who I serve."

Which brings to mind the famous Rose Garden beer the president and vice president shared with Prof. Gates and Sgt. Crowley – speaking of (dis)comfort. And that brings to mind Cambridge, which stayed true blue, 84-15, Walter Russell Mead informs us this morning in his delightfully tongue-in-cheek **Arena post**. ("First, some good news for Democrats: the base is secure.") As goes Harvard, so goes Berkeley.

But to today's Arena question. The Democratic left is predictably outraged that "the people" they so love in the abstract have so disappointed them in the concrete. Exhibit A is last night's **Arena post** by *The Nation's* Katrina vanden Heuvel. Railing against "the Tea Party's inchoate right-wing populism" (if it's infested Massachusetts, shudder to think of it in Idaho!), Katrina tells Obama to "get tough, get bold, kiss 'post-partisanship' goodbye," and "put yourself squarely back on the side of working people" by "passing the strongest possible healthcare bill as quickly as is feasible." And there's the cliff, Katrina.

Lanny Davis has more sober advice for Obama in this morning's *Wall Street Journal*.



Ongoing Arenas

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Arena Referee

- [Fred Barbash](#)

To those who are pointing fingers at Martha Coakley, Lanny says, "This was a defeat not of the messenger but of the message" – the unrelenting leftism that has come from this White House and this Congress. And he points, by way of instruction, to Bill Clinton's response to the disastrous elections of 1994, though he doesn't mention Clinton's ringing, albeit inaccurate, description of his course-change -- "The era of big government is over." Is it in Obama's DNA to make such a course correction? Does *he* have a reset button?

Archives

| Subject | Date |
|--|---------------|
| Open Mic Massachusetts | Jan. 15, 2010 |
| The 2010 race: a Republican House-real shot, long shot or no shot? | Jan. 14, 2010 |
| Has Obama changed the way Washington works? Bonus babies: Are big banker bonuses "ridiculous and offensive," (as Christina Romer says)? What, if anything, should be done about them? Massachusetts: Does the the closer-than-anyone-expected race jeopardize the Democratic agenda? | Jan. 13, 2010 |
| Dear Harold (Ford) Mass. Senate: Is a close call a victory for the | Jan. 12, 2010 |

Arena Players

Current and Former Elected Officials

| | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Marsha Blackburn | John A. Boehner |
| Christopher S. 'Kit' Bond | Barbara Boxer |
| Phil Bredesen | Jeb Bush |
| John Campbell | Michael B. Coleman |
| Jim Cooper | John Cornyn |
| Mario M. Cuomo | Tom Daschle |
| Rosa DeLauro | Jim DeMint |
| Manny Diaz | Cal Dooley |
| Byron Dorgan | Jim Doyle |
| Mickey Edwards | John Ensign |
| Victor H. Fazio | Bob Filner |
| Lee Fisher | Martin Frost |
| Ettore Greco | Gary Hart |
| Jeb Hensarling | John Hostettler |
| Steny H. Hoyer | Mike Johanns |
| Ted Kaufman | John Kerry |
| Paul Kirk | Larry LaRocco |
| Jim Leach | Carl Levin |
| John Lewis | Trent Lott |

GOP? "Game Change": Lessons of a much-hyped book

What should happen to: A)Harry Reid B)Michael Steele? Does the news media (aided and abetted) spend way too much time and space "huffing and puffing" about gaffes? Jan. 11, 2010

Open Mic Jan. 09, 2010

Do you feel safer from terrorism today than you did the day before? Assess Obama's response. Jan. 08, 2010

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Edward Markey | Kevin McCarthy |
| Howard P. (Buck) McKeon | Jeff Merkley |
| Barbara Mikulski | Thomas Nelson |
| Randy Neugebauer | Don Nickles |
| Martin O'Malley | David Orentlicher |
| Tim Pawlenty | Mike Pence |
| Paul Ryan | Linda Sanchez |
| Bernie Sanders | Rick Santorum |
| Patricia Schroeder | Donna Shalala |
| Louise Slaughter | Michael S. Steele |
| Zach Wamp | |

Strategists, Scholars and Authors

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|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Karen Ackerman | Richard Albert |
| Edward Alden | David All |
| Richard V. Allen | Jeanne Allen |
| Mike Allen | Anita L. Allen |
| Whit Ayres | Andrew J. Bacevich |
| Dean Baker | Ross Baker |
| Jack M. Balkin | Brad Bannon |
| Jan Baran | Henri J. Barkey |
| Randy Barnett | Bruce Bartlett |
| Gary L. Bauer | Robert Bauer |
| Daniel F. Becker | Paul Begala |
| Georges C. Benjamin | Mary Frances Berry |
| Rick Beyer | David Biespiel |
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| Paul Bledsoe | Robert J. Blendon |
| David Boaz | Adam Bonin |
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| Charles W. Calomiris | Michael F. Cannon |
| James Carafano | Maria Cardona |
| Maurice (Mickey) Carroll | James Carville |
| Guy-Uriel E. Charles | Craig Charney |
| Andrei Cherny | William Jelani Cobb |




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| Cesar Conda | Rhodes Cook |
| Rory Cooper | Chester Crocker |
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| Peter Guber | Richard N. Haass |

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The Arena is a cross-party, cross-discipline forum for intelligent and lively conversation about political and policy issues. Contributors have been selected by POLITICO staff and editors. Fred Barbash, Arena's moderator, is a Senior Editor at POLITICO and a veteran of 29 years in journalism at the Washington Post. Each morning, POLITICO sends a question based on that day's news to all contributors.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

