

Dear Washington,
Are you listening?

We have something to say!
NoBeverageandFoodTaxes.com



**CHECK OUT THE NEW
COPENHAGEN ARENA**

An ongoing discussion on the U.N. Climate Change conference.

Dec. 14, 2009

Driving the Conversation:

Arena Ref: Fred Barbash

1) At this point, do you think the Senate will pass health care in 2009? What if it doesn't? (Bonus high school civics question from my teenaged son: Why does Congress turn chicken in election years anyway?)

2) What does Obama accomplish by calling bankers "fat cats?"

Noon livechat on Justice Antonin Scalia with Joan Biskupic, author of "[American Original: The Life and Constitution of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia](#)"

Share this



Print

Email



David Boaz

Executive VP, Cato Institute :

It's looking like a health care overhaul won't pass this year. The basic problem is that the more people learn about the bill, the less they like it.

[Pollster.com's summary of polls](#) shows that opposition exceeded support in July, and the balance is now 53 percent against, 38 percent for. That's not an attractive environment for politicians who look forward to reelection. And it's the same trend that happened in 1993-94. You announce that you're going to give everyone health insurance at low cost, and people

like the idea. But then as they learn more about the details, support falls. And so far, it keeps falling.

And the polls aren't being moved by a massive negative campaign. In fact, as of November, **more money had been spent on TV ads supporting the Democratic plans than opposing them.** No, the fundamental problem is that the government is running a trillion-dollar annual deficit already, and Congress and the president propose to create a new program that promises to cover millions more people with health insurance, drag currently insured people onto government programs, and save billions of dollars in the process. People who think about that don't believe it. Which is why President Obama and congressional leaders have been setting deadlines, holding weekend votes, and pushing to vote NOW. They can read polls, and they see that the trend in public opinion is more negative every week.

There's another aspect of the problems that the Democrats face. The more complex and encompassing a policy gets, the more different aspects of life it touches. A plan this comprehensive necessarily touches on such issues as what the plans will cover -- like abortion or Christian Science practitioners; how they will cut costs -- like by denying some treatments; which patients or providers will get less than they expected; and so on. And each of those highly charged issues can cost you a vote or two, making it hard to put together a majority for any specific plan. Sometimes Congress dodges that bullet by writing laws that say "there shall be clean air, and EPA shall figure out how." But I don't think that's going to work in this case.

Subject	Date
Obama's sinking job approval: "So?" (h/t Dick Cheney) Plus, Palin and the Post on climate science	Dec. 09, 2009
Public option compromise: Does it achieve anything? Bonus question: Harry Reid's mouth: Does it achieve anything?	Dec. 08, 2009
Write Obama's Nobel speech: how should he open? Plus, NPR v Fox News?	Dec. 07, 2009
The Arena: Copenhagen Climate Conference Edition Recent posts by Keith Schneider, Peter Goldmark, Leighton Steward, Mindy Lubber, Molly Moore, Daniel Kammen.	Dec. 04, 2009
Open Mic	Dec. 05, 2009
Obama's Copenhagen change of plans: Meaningful or theatrical? Plus, do we need a new Fed chief?	Dec. 04, 2009