



Oct. 23, 2009

Driving the Conversation:

Arena Ref: [Fred Barbash](#)

Health Care Arena: The Opt-out Option

Oct. 28, 2009

Previous Health Care Arena is [here](#).

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Michael F. Cannon

Cato, Dir. of Health Policy Studies :

Are Savvier Democrats Playing Rope-a-Dope?

Let's simplify things and say there are essentially two parts to the health care bills moving through Congress: an individual mandate that would **effectively nationalize** health care, and a government-run program that would explicitly nationalize it **slowly, over time**.

One explanation for Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) including the government-run program -- supporters call it a "public option"; I prefer **Fannie Med** -- in the Senate bill is that Fannie Med's popularity is on the rise. Another explanation is that Reid had to include it **to remain majority leader** and get left-wing Nevadans to work for his re-election.

But a third explanation, not inconsistent with the others, is that the savvier Democrats know that all they need to nationalize health care is an individual mandate. So they'll let Fannie Med take a beating, and then pass the more sweeping individual mandate when opponents are too exhausted and distracted by their "victory" over Fannie Med to notice.

Thoughts?

(Cross-posted at [Cato@Liberty](#).)

Subject

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