



**David Boaz**, Executive VP, Cato Institute:

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As Chou Enlai supposedly said about the effects of the French Revolution, it's too early to tell what the political landscape will be in 2010. Democrats want to believe that the public wants health care "reform" and will punish people who block it.

They may be right. Polls generally show that the broad concepts President Obama talks about are popular. But coming on top of all the spending and bailouts of the past year -- some of which were done by President Bush but are now part of the Obama-associated perception of out-of-control spending -- people are very skeptical about spending more money on health care. As Gallup reported last week, "American adults doubt that President Obama can expand health care without boosting taxes on the middle class, and overwhelming majorities are ready to oppose plans that would result in higher taxes."

And American adults are right -- you can't extend health care to tens of millions of people without spending a lot of money, and that means more taxes now or bigger deficits now and more taxes later. So I think the most likely effect is the one that health care "reform" had in 1994 -- it will persuade centrist and independent voters that the Democrats are a threat to their pocketbooks and will push voters in an anti-big-government direction. And despite the actual record of Bush and the congressional Republicans, the only way to vote "no" on Democratic big-government schemes is to vote Republican. Charlie Cook may have been a bit too strong when he said that the growing fears of moderate and independent voters that "Washington was taking irreversible actions that would drive mountainous deficits higher, ...that government was taking on far more than it could competently handle and far more than the country could afford, [and] expanding too far, too fast" should "terrify" Democrats. But they should certainly be worried.