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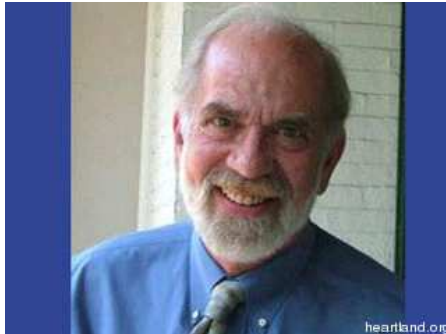
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TPMmuckraker

Top Health-Care Reform Foe: Racist Emailer Is "Rock Solid Patriot"

Zachary Roth | October 5, 2009, 2:04PM



Greg Scandlen, Heartland Institute

A top conservative health-care reform foe is going to bat for David McKalip, the Florida neurosurgeon and anti-reform activist who this summer was **caught by TPMmuckraker** sending a racist email that showed President Obama as a witch doctor.

In an email to fellow activists, obtained by TPMmuckraker, Greg Scandlen, the founder and director of **Consumers for Health Care Choices**, and a senior fellow at the conservative Heartland Institute, called McKalip "one of the best men I know" and "a rock solid patriot." Scandlen also revealed that he himself had urged McKalip to rejoin the fight against reform, after McKalip had temporarily taken a lower profile in the movement in response to widespread outrage over the witch-doctor email.

As **we reported** earlier today, McKalip appears to have taken Scandlen's advice, attending a meeting this past weekend of conservative doctors -- including two U.S. congressmen -- and afterwards sending an exhortatory email to fellow activists. Conservative doctors have been organizing in

recent days, in response to the White House event, held this morning, featuring pro-reform doctors.

On Saturday evening, an activist named Denise forwarded that message from McKalip to a Tea Party email list. In response, another Tea Partier, Rob Neppell, objected, saying that McKalip's "presence discredits us all with the taint of racism" and arguing that he should be "shunned."

At that, Scandlen took umbrage. In a response to the group, he called Neppell's message "a slander against one of the best men I know," and argued that McKalip merely "made one mistake. He forwarded an offensive picture of Obama. PERIOD. He didn't create it. He didn't endorse it." (In fact, McKalip wrote "funny stuff" above the picture.)

Scandlen continued:

Dr. McKalip is a rock solid patriot and is completely devoted to preserving our freedom in health care and everything else.

Because he is an effective leader he was attacked by ACORN types who threatened his family. He withdrew from public discourse for a while to protect his family and his career. I for one encouraged him to get back in the battle. And he has.

This list has gotten FAR too interested in personally attacking other people who are working toward the same goals. It is in danger of becoming a small-minded gossip society. It would be a tragedy and a betrayal of the American People if we continue to devolve into this kind of self-destruction.

The string of emails was obtained by TPMmuckraker.

Like McKalip, Scandlen is not just random Tea Party activist. The Cato Institute has **called him** "one of the leading lights of the consumer-directed health care movement," and he's **quoted frequently** in the media as a staunch opponent of efforts to give the government a larger role in the system. In recent weeks, he has been making a **series of public appearances to oppose reform**. (Scroll down to: "Where's Greg?")

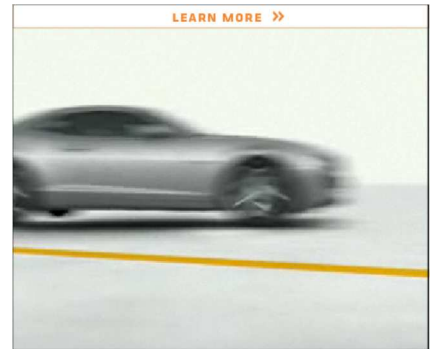
Scandlen did not immediately respond to TPMmuckraker's request for comment.

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