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The Left's Anti-Lieberman Hatefest

From the halls of the Senate to left-wing blogs and the *Washington Post*, Democrats have been busy the past day viciously attacking Joe Lieberman for saying that he'll [filibuster a bill with a Medicare buy-in provision](#).

An anonymous senior Senate aide says that Lieberman [double-crossed Harry Reid](#); liberal blogger Jane Hamsher, last seen putting the senator in [blackface](#), is trying to [drive Lieberman's wife from a position on a breast cancer charity](#); and *Washington Post* blogger and [omniscient child pundit](#) Ezra Klein [writes](#) that Lieberman "seems willing to cause the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people in order to settle an old electoral score." (*The New Republic's* Jonathan Chait seconds Klein's sentiment--"[Lieberman] seems to view the prospect of sticking it to the liberals who supported his Democratic opponent in 2006 as a goal potentially worth sacrificing the lives of tens of thousands of Americans to fulfill"--and adds that [he thinks Lieberman is stupid](#).) All of this from the folks who attack the GOP for its "ideological conformity."

In a followup post, Klein [writes](#) that his contention that Lieberman would cause the deaths of hundreds of thousands of out of spite is "not a particularly controversial statement. It relies on data from the Institute of Medicine and the Urban Institute, both of which are credible sources."

Cato's Michael Cannon explains that Klein's attack on Lieberman is based on data that is [very disputable](#):

A careful study by health economists Amy Finkelstein and Robin McKnight found that in its first 10 years, Medicare had no discernible impact on elderly mortality rates. The authors hypothesize that prior to Medicare, seniors who lacked coverage largely got the care that they needed either by paying out of pocket or relying on public or private charity. Whether Medicare had any impact on elderly mortality after its first 10 years remains an open question.

Or consider a study by Richard Kronick, a professor of family and preventive medicine at U.C.-San Diego and a former health policy adviser to the Clinton administration. Kronick performed the largest-ever study on the health effects of being uninsured and concludes that the IOM estimate "is almost certainly incorrect." Kronick concludes that "the best available evidence" suggests "there would not be much change in the number of deaths in the United States as a result of universal coverage." [...]

Economists Helen Levy of the University of Michigan and David Meltzer of the University of Chicago surveyed the entire economics literature on the connection between health insurance and health. They conclude, "The central question of how health insurance affects health, for whom it matters, and how much, remains largely unanswered at the level of detail needed to inform policy decisions."

Hat Tip: [Ramesh Ponnuru](#)

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