

"An American Choice" as a "Frame" of Freedom in the Health Care Debate

A Comment on [*The PolicySpeak Disaster for Health Care*](#),

By George Lakoff in *The Huffington Post*

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Professor Lakoff has written a brilliant analysis. However, I need to make two points (policy speak) from a different perspective (frame).

Having produced a progressive talk radio show (<http://barrytalk.com>), I can attest that there are far fewer progressive voices on the radio and far smaller audiences for them, despite great efforts to syndicate them. Our communication system is indeed at a great disadvantage to the Rush Limbaughs and Sean Hannitys of this world; then again, I'd rather belong to a political party whose leaders are elected officials rather than "entertaining personalities" (Seems like a "frame" to me).

Second, the frame of an "American plan" [as Professor Lakoff proposed, as an alternative to the term "public option"] is too broad. It plays into the hands of the Right, who are convincing people, wrongly, that everyone will be forced into a public plan. Rush would drool at the chance to say an "American plan" is "socialized medicine" (just as he would about single-payer).

The word "option" comes from a policy background, but it conveys an important frame that resonates with the American public:

freedom, of choice. Perhaps, an American Choice might be a more apt framing. But the idea of freedom vs. forced participation is key to much of the debate now. A "plan" sounds more like a "scheme" that can be forced upon an unwilling public. A "choice," or "option," is something the public is craving. That is the frame we should choose; it is the frame the Right is incorrectly but very effectively applying to much of our debate.