

***Make history? Yes, we can.
And did. Again.***

**A DailyKos.com Diary Entry, An OpEdNews.com Article,
A My.BarackObama.com Entry, and an E-Mail to Political Activists**

March 23, 2010

From Teddy Roosevelt to Teddy Kennedy, some of the best and brightest American leaders have fought for the now-45,000 Americans who die each year because they have no health insurance, and the nearly one million who go bankrupt each year because of medical expenses, even though most of those Americans had health insurance when they first got sick.

But today, March 23, 2010, President Barack Obama has just signed into law the historic, sweeping reforms of our health care system—indeed, as the unmoved and unmovable Republican opposition stated, one-sixth of the entire American economy—after their passage by the U.S. House, under the leadership of Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and the U.S. Senate, under the likewise heroic leadership of Majority Leader Harry Reid.

Of course, more work remains to be done. Sen. Reid assured the House before their historic vote that a “significant majority” of senators will soon approve the House amendments, by simple—unfilibustered—democratic majority,

via “budget reconciliation”—the same rules used by the GOP to pass Bush tax cuts primarily for the wealthy, which we are still paying for, unlike these health care reforms, which the Congressional Budget Office estimates will not only pay for themselves but also cut the federal deficit by over one trillion dollars.

And over the next several months, leading up to the elections in the fall, those opposed to these historic reforms have promised to do everything within their power, at the federal and state and astroturf levels, to continue their vicious, sometimes violent, sometimes racist and homophobic and misogynist and otherwise hateful campaign of misinformation, in an attempt to further confuse and terrorize millions of Americans and turn them against their own best interest, for the ultimate benefit of those who have profited so handsomely and immorally from the health care status quo.

But encouraged by our success, and our deep-seated moral conviction that what we have done and continue to do is quite simply the right thing

to do, just as it was for those who came before us to enact Social Security and Medicare or the landmark Civil Rights legislation of the 1950s and '60s, we will continue to make history—breaking the color barrier to the White House, preventing another Great Depression (the near-collapse of the world's financial system and the resultant Great Recession being the previous president's "contribution" to history), and helping ourselves and our fellow Americans whose only fault—in falling ill—is being human.

WHAT WAS TRULY AT STAKE

[From the late-Sen. Kennedy to Pres. Obama:](#)

What was at stake in the health care battle was not "the details of policy, but the character of our country."

ON THE NIGHT OF VICTORY, OVER A CENTURY IN THE MAKING

[From Pres. Obama after the historic House vote:](#)

"We proved that this government—a government of the people and by the people—still works for the people. ...

"Today's vote answers the dreams of so many who have fought for this reform. To every unsung American who took the time to sit down and write a letter or type out an e-mail hoping

your voice would be heard—it has been heard tonight. To the untold numbers who knocked on doors and made phone calls, who organized and mobilized out of a firm conviction that change in this country comes not from the top down, but from the bottom up—let me reaffirm that conviction: This moment is possible because of you. ...

"This is what change looks like. ...

"Tonight, we answered the call of history as so many generations of Americans have before us. When faced with crisis, we did not shrink from our challenge—we overcame it. We did not avoid our responsibility—we embraced it. We did not fear our future—we shaped it."

THANKS TO MILLIONS OF AMERICANS, ORGANIZED AND EMPOWERED

[From legendary progressive political organizer Robert Creamer:](#)

"Credit goes to the millions of members of Organize for America (OFA), MoveOn.org, the major health care reform coalition, Health Care for America Now (HCAN), U.S. Action, the Center for Community Change, the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), The Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the AFL-CIO, the National Education Association, the Center for Community Change, Americans United for

Change, The Communications Workers of America (CWA), AARP, the Alliance of Retired Americans, the NAACP, the National Council of La Raza, the National Women’s Law Center, Planned Parenthood, the Center for American Progress, Progress Now, Families USA—and scores of other grassroots organizations.

“These are real organizations—not the creations of ‘astro-turf’ lobby firms like Dick Armey’s ‘Freedom Works.’

“Credit especially goes to organized labor—the bedrock of the progressive forces in America—without which victory was not even remotely possible—as well as progressive funders like Atlantic Philanthropies.”

ON WHAT WILL—AND WON’T— HAPPEN, STARTING THIS YEAR

[From Pres. Obama to House Democrats on the eve of their historic vote:](#)

“But it may also be possible that they [the GOP critics] realize after health reform passes and I sign that legislation into law, that it’s going to be a little harder to mischaracterize what this effort has been all about.

“Because this year, small businesses will start getting tax credits so that they can offer health insurance to employees who currently don’t have it. Because this year, those same parents

who are worried about getting coverage for their children with preexisting conditions now are assured that insurance companies have to give them coverage—this year.

“Because this year, insurance companies won’t suddenly be able to drop your coverage when you get sick—or impose lifetime limits or restrictive limits on the coverage that you have. Maybe they know that this year, for the first time, young people will be able to stay on their parents’ health insurance until they’re 26 years old and they’re [the GOP are] thinking that just might be popular all across the country.

“And what they also know is what won’t happen. They know that after this legislation passes and after I sign this bill, lo and behold nobody is pulling the plug on Granny. It turns out that in fact people who like their health insurance are going to be able to keep their health insurance; that there’s no government takeover. People will discover that if they like their doctor, they’ll be keeping their doctor. In fact, they’re more likely to keep their doctor because of a stronger system.”

KEY FEATURES OF THE NEW HEALTH CARE LAW

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/03/19/us/politics/20100319-health-care-reconciliation.html>

FOR THE PROPONENTS OF A PUBLIC OPTION TO CONSIDER

From the *New York Times* summary above:

“The federal Office of Personnel Management, which provides health benefits to federal employees, would sign contracts with insurers to offer at least two national health plans to individuals, families and small businesses. The new plans would be separate from the program for federal employees, and premiums would be calculated separately. At least one of the plans would have to operate on a nonprofit basis.”

Although that is not a true public option, let alone single-payer coverage, it would be similar to the national, nonprofit plans that help keep for-profit insurers honest in [The Netherlands](#).

ON BEING A DEMOCRAT

[From Pres. Obama to House Democrats on the eve of their historic vote:](#)

“Something inspired you to get involved, and something inspired you to be a Democrat instead of running as a Republican. Because somewhere deep in your heart you said to yourself, I believe in an America in which we don’t just look out for ourselves, that we don’t just tell people you’re on your own, that we are proud of our individualism, we are proud of our liberty, but we also have a sense of neighborliness and a

sense of community—and we are willing to look out for one another and help people who are vulnerable and help people who are down on their luck and give them a pathway to success and give them a ladder into the middle class. That’s why you decided to run.”

ON SPEAKER PELOSI

“The main thing was Pelosi sticking with it and doing the quiet work of bringing people back to saying, ‘We’re doing this.’” —[John D. Podesta, Pres. and CEO of the Center for American Progress, and a former chief of staff to Pres. Bill Clinton](#)

“She is a strong speaker, there isn’t any question about that.” —[Rep. John A. Boehner of Ohio, the Republican leader](#) (who also declared reform “[Armageddon](#)”)

THE “LEADERSHIP” OF THE LAST REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

“There will be no cooperation for the rest of the year.” —[Sen. John McCain, after the historic House vote](#)

NO REWARD FOR “THE PARTY OF ‘NO’”

[From legendary GOP strategist David Frum:](#)

“Conservatives and Republicans today suffered their most crushing legislative defeat since the 1960s.

“It’s hard to exaggerate the magnitude of the disaster. ...

“A huge part of the blame for today’s disaster attaches to conservatives and Republicans ourselves.

“At the beginning of this process we made a strategic decision: unlike, say, Democrats in 2001 when President Bush proposed his first tax cut, we would make no deal with the administration. No negotiations, no compromise, nothing. We were going for all the marbles. This would be Obama’s Waterloo—just as healthcare was Clinton’s in 1994.

“Only, the hardliners overlooked a few key facts: Obama was elected with 53% of the vote, not Clinton’s 42%. The liberal block within the Democratic congressional caucus is bigger and stronger than it was in 1993–94. And of course the Democrats also remember their history, and also remember the consequences of their 1994 failure.

“This time, when we went for all the marbles, we ended with none. ...

“[Even though] Barack Obama badly wanted Republican votes for his plan. ...

“No illusions please: This bill will not be repealed. Even if Republicans scored a 1994 style landslide in November, how many votes could we muster to re-open the ‘doughnut hole’ and charge seniors more for prescription drugs? How many votes to re-allow insurers to rescind policies when they discover a pre-existing condition? How many votes to banish 25 year olds from their parents’ insurance coverage? And even if the votes were there—would President Obama sign such a repeal?

“We followed the most radical voices in the party and the movement [Limbaugh, Beck, et al.], and they led us to abject and irreversible defeat.”

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At least the Republicans won’t have to pay with their very lives for their defeat, as tens of thousands of Americans—of any or no party—would have every year for ours.

God bless America!