



## **KIDSROCK**

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The Honorable Nikki R. Haley  
Office of the Governor  
1205 Pendleton Street  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

**Dear Honorable Governor Haley:**

**I am enclosing a cogent and concise summary of the arguments for and against the Affordable Care Act as copied down from an MSNBC news program hosted by Chris Hayes. The wording and thinking therein make this document worth disseminating. Thanks for reading it.**

Sincerely,

**Archie Merwin**

# But They Can't Do That

*From All In on the Chris Hayes Show, Nov 17, 2014*

RE: Fox aflutter about Jonathan Gribus's remarks that 'Americans are stupid' and therefore can't be told about the true nature of the Affordable Care Act

It is no accident that right now, in 2014, conservatives are gleefully debating a legislative process that took place almost five years ago in broad daylight. Because what is their alternative?

1. They could, instead, be attacking the existing Affordable Care Act (which is no longer just a thousand page bill, or some kind of looming future abstraction, but rather the actual law of the land). They could, for instance, be railing against a Federal Exchange website that's a complete and utter mess. That is, after all, what they did a year ago when the original debut of Healthcare.gov turned into a debacle. **But they can't do that now.** Because when open enrollment began this weekend, the website was able to handle a million visitors and a 100,000 applications – a far cry from the disaster of a year ago, and in fact, enough of a success story to make the website a non-story.
2. Conservatives could be attacking the Affordable Care Act for failing to accomplish one of its main goals – covering the uninsured. **But they can't do that** because the number of Americans without health insurance has gone down about 25% the last year. And almost 6 in 10 of the people buying insurance on the exchanges were previously uninsured.
3. They could be attacking the law for scaring insurance companies away from the health care market. **But they can't do that** because more insurers are offering more plans on the federal exchanges this year than they did last year.
4. They could attack Obamacare for costing the tax payers tens of billions of dollars more than law makers anticipated **but they can't do that** because the overall price tag is coming in at about 104 billion dollars less than the Congressional Budget Office previously projected.
5. Of course they could attack the law for driving up health care inflation – accelerating the increase in how much we, as a country, spend collectively on health care. **But they can't do that** – because health care inflation has dropped to the lowest rate in a decade.
6. They could attack it based on the fact that premiums are skyrocketing across the board and everyone buying insurance on the Obamacare exchanges will now be paying through the nose. **But they can't do that**, because while some premiums are going up, it's on par with the increases under employer-based insurance. And on average, Obamacare premiums are lower than anticipated.
7. Well, they could go after the law based on outcry from the angry, frustrated, disappointed people who have actually bought insurance through the Obamacare exchanges. **But they can't do that** because the latest polling shows that 7 out of 10 people enrolled in Obamacare are happy with their coverage.

In fact, if you take all those different pieces of the law and put them together, they add up to a remarkable and improbable legislative success story . . . possibly one of the greatest of our time. [Left out comet landing comparison] And it's all the more remarkable because the criticism of the legislative process that brought in Obamacare is not off base – it was messy . . . and often ugly. I covered the creation of the Affordable Care Act back when Jonathan Gruber was consulting back on Capitol Hill. And I thought I was witnessing the construction of a Rube Goldberg machine to deliver health care that, were it to avoid political pitfalls, had grown so baroque, so impenetrable, and so complex, that when the time came to turn the thing on, it would all collapse before everyone's eyes.

A year ago, when the health care exchanges did turn on for the first time and it initially looked like they might implode . . . I was worried. Maybe the whole thing was too complex. Maybe the critics were right. And maybe, as Charles Krauthammer said, it showed that liberalism doesn't work.

"We have . . . not just Obamacare unraveling, not just the Obama administration unraveling, not just the Democratic majority of the Senate . . . we could be looking at the collapse of American Liberalism. Obamacare is the 'big thing' for them." [C. Krauthammer, Fox News broadcast]

I will say this to you Charles: If two months of website failure shows that liberalism didn't work, then a year later, all the evidence suggests the opposite – that liberalism does, in fact, work. Because what happened in the last year is that more people got access to health care that's affordable and decent.

They've been relieved of the uncertainty and cruelty of a system that, in the richest country in the world, throws people to the wolves to fend for themselves when they suddenly get cancer and don't have the good fortune of being employed. And now, armed with some tapes of an MIT professor saying some stupid things, and a few potentially sympathetic Supreme Court Justices, conservatives are looking to destroy all of it . . . to blow it all up . . . to grind it into dust and raise the Affordable Care Act to the ground based on no principle other than their implacable ideological opposition to the project of providing health insurance, partially, through the government . . . to metaphorically: show up at the door of millions of Americans and knock on it and enter into their houses and rip their health insurance up in front of them and return them to the tyranny of fear under which they lived before the Act's passage.

This is where we stand. And those are the stakes.