

# *The K.F. Stone Weekly*

(Formerly "Beating the Bushes")



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## EVERYONE HATES OBAMACARE: JUST ASK TED CRUZ AND CATHY ROGERS

It's now been more two years since the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) got off to a less than stellar start. One will recall that during its first several days, the ACA website was beset with a series of embarrassing technical glitches which wound up frustrating the bejesus out of those seeking health coverage, let alone costing taxpayers somewhere in the neighborhood of \$840 million dollars. When these frustrating glitches were



appended on to all those frightful claims about the ACA enslaving America let alone driving a stake through its economic heart, Republicans began salivating over what they presumed would be a gift-wrapped issue for the future all but guaranteeing their future electoral success. And while it is certainly -- and from where I stand lamentably -- true that the GOP had a field day in the 2014 off-year election, it had little to do with any overarching aversion to Obamacare.

And yet, there are still those who tirelessly point out its weak technical start, its "similarity to Socialism," its need to be utterly extirpated from the pages of history and replaced with . . . with . . . what? Just what would they replace the A.C.A. with? To date, whether they know it or not, those who rip up Obamacare and urge starting all over again, answer in the name of silent clown Buster Keaton's boat: "*Damfino*." Among Republicans who have managed to break away from the anonymity of the Washington Congressional pack,

Texas Senator Ted Cruz and Washington State Representative Cathy McMorris Rogers have, each in their own way, been making recent headlines about Obamacare . . . but for widely different reasons. Now make no mistake about it: both are viscerally, fundamentally against the A.C.A. and all it stands for and would gladly replace it in a minute if only they had an idea of what they'd put in its place.

Speaking at the late Reverend Jerry Fallwell's Liberty University the other day, Texas Senator Ted Cruz became the first Republican to announce his candidacy for the White House. In announcing that his wife would be taking a leave from her position with Goldman Sachs, Cruz mentioned that he and his family -- which includes two young daughters -- would now be needing health insurance: *"We'll be getting new health insurance and we'll presumably do it through my job with the Senate, and so we'll be on the federal exchange with millions of others on the federal exchange,"* Cruz said. Asked whether he would accept the government contribution available to lawmakers and congressional staffers for their health care coverage through the ACA, Cruz said he will *"follow the text of the law."*



Sen. Ted Cruz

Quite an admission from the man who led a 21-hour filibuster against the president's healthcare plan on the senate floor back in 2013. This is the tactic which first brought Senator Cruz to public attention: as the man who, more than seemingly anyone, was blamed for the government shutdown which lasted 16 days. And now, the same man who is going onto Obamacare for himself and his family, has the *baytzim* to tell all those students forced to attend (or be fined) his announcement at Liberty that under his presidency *"Instead of the joblessness, instead of the millions forced into part-time work, instead of the millions who've lost their health insurance, lost their doctors, have faced skyrocketing health insurance premiums, imagine in 2017 a new president signing legislation repealing every word of Obamacare."*

Am I missing something here? Oh yes, were he to be elected President of the United States, he and his family could then go off Obamacare and start getting covered by whatever Rolls Royce policy covers 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue . . . and to Hell with everyone else who is un- or under-employed, has a preexisting condition or simply cannot afford a policy which runs \$1,000, \$2,000 or more per month. Sounds fair, no?

Then there is Washington Representative Cathy McMorris Rogers. Readers of this column will no doubt remember that the GOP chose Representative Rogers to deliver the party's State of the Union response this past January. In that address, Ms. Rogers -- a winsome Republican from Central Casting -- spoke about Obamacare,

averring that "We've all talked to too many people who have received cancellation notices they didn't expect, or who can no longer see the doctors they always have. No," she said, "we shouldn't go back to the way things were, but the president's healthcare law isn't working."



Rep. Cathy McMorris Rogers

Oh really?

The other day, Representative Rogers, who serves as House Republican Conference Chair, took to her Facebook page and posted the following: "This week marks the 5th anniversary of Obamacare being signed into law. Whether it's turned your tax filing into a nightmare, you're facing skyrocketing premiums, or your employer has reduced your work hours, I want to hear about it. Please share your story with me so that I can better understand the challenges you're facing."

She then attached a [link to her congressional office website](#) where folks could tell what the

Congresswoman presumed would be tales of horror and gloom.

Surprise, surprise.

Instead of the final teary act of some lachrymose soap opera, what Ms. Rogers *did* receive were thousands -- *thousands* -- of [Facebook entries](#) from just plain folks, the vast majority of whom said that the ACA was a lifesaver for themselves and their families:

- *The Republican solution to the Affordable Care Act? Let people drown in debt, clutter our emergency rooms, and die from lack of coverage due to pre-existing conditions. No thanks, "Congresswoman". Some of us care more about our fellow Americans than trying to bash the President. Keep trying to scare your followers with phony horror stories.*
- *I think we should repeal Obamacare, and replace it ... with universal socialized medicine - like the rest of the industrialized nations of the world.*
- *My sister, a breast cancer survivor, couldn't get health insurance, and now she has it. Thanks, Obama!*
- *With Obamacare, my child with Type 1 diabetes cannot be denied insurance.*

Now, this is certainly not to say that we cannot improve upon Obamacare, for we certainly can. It's called Universal Care. But that's a subject for another time.

Until then, it might do well to keep reminding all those in Congress who want to strip the Affordable Care Act past its most basic foundation, that if they do, they are going to

get a raucous earful from the millions who have been finally been able to afford even minimal coverage. From where I stand -- one who spent years paying between \$2,500 and \$3,000 a month for insurance -- providing for the health of a nation is just as important as providing for a nation's defense perimeter. For a country with secure borders and ailing people is an unsafe nation.

On this issue -- not to mention many others -- I refuse to follow the lead of folks like Ted Cruz and Cathy McMorris Rogers -- politicians who stand foursquarely against progress unless it can somehow benefit them. How can they justify such glaring hypocrisy?

We'll let Buster Keaton answer that one:

*Damfino . . .*

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