

February 17, 2014

James Taranto examines the cases of liberals who say they're tired of defending Obamacare, and asks an important question. "Why is it they think they are responsible for the defense?"

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Fox News Channel's Kirsten Powers feels the same way. On "Special Report With Bret Baier," she paraphrased Fournier and enthusiastically assented: "The headline was 'Why I'm Getting Tired of Defending ObamaCare,' and I'm going to say, 'Amen, brother.' . . . People who have supported this law, who support universal health care, are constantly put in a position where they have to defend the president, who has really incompetently put this together, rolled it out."

Which raises a question: What made Fournier and Powers think they had to defend ObamaCare in the first place? In Powers's case, an answer suggests itself: Cast in the role of "Fox News liberal," perhaps she feels obliged to stay on that side most of the time (though one suspects her Fox bosses would be tolerant of that particular heterodoxy).

But Fournier? He's not supposed to be a partisan. "Like so many political columnists inside the Beltway, Fournier regularly exhibits a devotion to even handedness," notes Mediaite.com's Noah Rothman. "With a near pious commitment, no criticism of the Democratic Party can be issued without a commensurate nod to the faults and foibles of the Republican Party, and vice versa." ...

Kathleen Parker writes on white house spin.

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We are recovering from a recession, slowly. We continue to hope for improved employment numbers, even though we're now told the jobless rate doesn't matter anymore. Only about

3 million people have signed up for health insurance through the new marketplaces, well below expectations.

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Hot Air's Allahpundit posts on Jonathan Turley's complaint that the left's indifference to presidential power grabs is beginning to border on a cult of personality. "Beginning"?

There's nothing here that you haven't heard before if you watched him testify before Congress in December but it's still worth watching for two reasons. One is his tone, which has grown darker and more apocalyptic since then. More than once here he warns that Obama's "enablers" are destined to rue the fact that they remained silent "during this period." Precedents are being set that will be built on by future presidents of both parties; for all the complaining about executive overreach by Democrats circa 2006 and Republicans today, the cold realities of power are what they are. I'm tempted to say that it was O's latest unlawful delay to ObamaCare's employer mandate that soured Turley's mood, but I don't think that's it. I think it was the State of the Union, where Obama embraced bypassing Congress as formal policy. Look out for the phrase "borders on authoritarianism." ...

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It's an indulgence that we're told to resist. And I try to abide. (Stealing a bite of my daughter's YoBaby doesn't count, does it?)

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But what if dairy fat isn't the dietary demon we've been led to believe? New research suggests we may want to look anew.

Consider the findings of two recent studies that conclude the consumption of whole fat dairy is linked to reduced body fat.

In one paper, published by Swedish researchers in the Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care, middle-aged men who consumed high-fat milk, butter and cream were significantly less likely to become obese over a period of 12 years compared to men who never or rarely ate high-fat dairy.

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WSJ

The Tired Ones

ObamaCare is taxing in more ways than one.

by James Taranto

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Powers and Fournier

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Which raises a question: What made Fournier and Powers think they *had* to defend ObamaCare in the first place? In Powers's case, an answer suggests itself: Cast in the role of "Fox News liberal," perhaps she feels obliged to stay on that side most of the time (though one suspects her Fox bosses would be tolerant of that particular heterodoxy).

But Fournier? He's not supposed to be a partisan. "Like so many political columnists inside the Beltway, Fournier regularly exhibits a devotion to even handedness," notes Mediaite.com's [Noah Rothman](#). "With a near pious commitment, no criticism of the Democratic Party can be issued without a commensurate nod to the faults and foibles of the Republican Party, and vice versa."

True, during a two-decade career at the Associated Press, including a stint as Washington bureau chief, Fournier moved the venerable wire service away from straight news and toward more-opinionated writing, which he called "accountability journalism." This column has been highly critical of that effort, [beginning in 2007](#), but Fournier insisted back then: "We can be provocative without being partisan. We can be truth-tellers without being editorial writers."

In his current role as a columnist, he is free to be partisan or ideological if he wants. But Rothman is right to observe that Fournier continues to prefer the role (or perhaps it is a mere conceit) of above-it-all centrist. In his sick-of-defending-ObamaCare column, he is careful to wish a pox on the Republican House as well: "I want the ACA to work because the GOP has not offered a serious alternative that can pass Congress." (As a practical matter, that last qualifier makes Fournier's standard impossible to meet, at least this year while the Democrats hold the Senate majority.)

So what are Fournier's complaints about ObamaCare? For one, "the White House has politicized its signature policy." This criticism is right on target: "The win-at-all-cost mentality helped create a culture in which a partisan-line vote was deemed sufficient for passing transcendent legislation." But did Fournier just figure that out this week? The House's partisan vote for ObamaCare took place almost four years ago; the Senate's, more than four years ago.

Fournier goes on to criticize Obama for employing "a dishonest talking point" when "he knew, or should have known, it was false"; for a "website that didn't work" as a result of "an epidemic of incompetence that began in the Oval Office and ended with no accountability"; and for "fudging numbers and massaging facts to promote implementation," which he allows is "nothing illegal or even extraordinary for this era of spin."

"Finally," he writes, "there are the ACA rule changes":

Advocates for a strong executive branch, including me, have given the White House a pass on its rule-making authority, because implementing such a complicated law requires flexibility. But the law may be getting stretched to the point of breaking. Think of the ACA as a game of Jenga: Adjust one piece and the rest are affected; adjust too many and it falls.

If not illegal, the changes are fueling suspicion among Obama-loathing conservatives, and confusion among the rest of us. Even the law's most fervent supporters are frustrated.

So Fournier has gone from practicing "accountability journalism" to giving "the White House a pass." But be warned: He's so confused and frustrated that he could revoke the pass any day now.

Fournier adopts a tone of naiveté that is implausible for a nearly 30-year veteran of political reporting. *Politicians politicizing policy? Say it ain't so!* But it seems to us that this is a case in

which naiveté is a mask for cynicism. Here's how Fournier concludes (eliding the already-quoted swipe at the GOP):

Put me in the frustrated category. I want the ACA to work because I want health insurance provided to the millions without it, for both the moral and economic benefits. I want the ACA to work because, as Charles Lane wrote for The Washington Post, the link between work and insurance needs to be broken. . . .

Unfortunately, the president and his team are making their good intentions almost indefensible.

Fournier wants to assure his readers that *his* intentions in defending ObamaCare have been good. We have no reason to think they haven't been. But Fournier never acknowledges having made an error of judgment. If he's ended up looking foolish, he seems to think it's President Obama's fault for making a botch of the whole enterprise by being political and overreaching and incompetent. Those are fair criticisms of the president, but some of us have been making them for a long time. And can anyone seriously claim that ObamaCare would have been a smashing success if only it had been competently managed?

Washington Post

[The poetry of bad news around Obamacare](#)

by Kathleen Parker

It is easy these days to imagine that one is living in a fairy tale, albeit a dreary one.

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Let's see if we can iron this thing out a bit. First, a few indisputable facts:

We are recovering from a recession, slowly. We continue to hope for improved employment numbers, even though we're now told the jobless rate doesn't matter anymore. Only [about 3 million people have signed up](#) for health insurance through the new marketplaces, well below expectations.

But, says the White House, things are looking good. Hope wasn't for nothing. And please keep in mind, the economy isn't a speedboat. It's a big ol' ship that takes time to turn around.

Next: A [Congressional Budget Office report](#) issued this month estimates that by 2017, the workforce will be reduced by the equivalent of 2 million full-time jobs and 2.3 million by 2021 — because of Obamacare.

Some people will quit their jobs because of implicit marginal tax rates that significantly reduce wages and make working not worth it. In other cases, people will quit because their subsidies go down as their income goes up.

We call this disincentivizing in the real world.

The CBO's headline-grabbing news has parted the seas in new ways. Republicans, barely disguising their glee, remind us that they told us so. And this is actually true. Democrats remind us that those 2 million aren't being forced into unemployment but have the opportunity to choose not to work. No longer will people have to [stay in boring, unfulfilling jobs](#) just because they need health insurance.

As Nancy Pelosi (hereinafter Fairy Godmother) [explained to Jon Stewart](#), one of the goals of Obamacare was to give people "life, a healthier life, liberty, the pursuit of your own happiness." Stewart replied, "Really?"

"Yeah, if you want to be a writer, if you want to be a comedian, if you want to be a camera person, if you want to start a business .□.□." In an earlier iteration, Pelosi even suggested that Obamacare would allow people to quit their awful jobs to write poetry.

Well, bust my buttons! Why didn't you say that in the first place?

Not quite poetry, but I think it has potential.

Freeing people not to work has never been a national goal that I can recall, though everyone acknowledges the problem of tying insurance to employment. This is why Republicans have argued, belatedly, for portable insurance.

In the meantime, what the economy needs least is a federal program that prompts lower- and middle-class workers to drop out of the workforce. This is in addition to the many who are losing their jobs involuntarily or having their hours cut by their employers who want to avoid the mandate to buy insurance or the fine for failing to do so.

Again, this is a simple matter of incentives and survival, which President Obama seems to have recognized in [postponing the mandate](#) for midsize businesses until 2016. Or perhaps he is trying to head off another health-care controversy before the midterm elections? Shucks, do you suppose?

Add to the above the [CBO's report in May](#) that 31 million people will not have health insurance in 2023.

Any one of these things would be bad news. Combined, they boggle the well-ordered mind. If I may invoke our Fairy Godmother again, Pelosi was the most honest of all when [she warned us](#) that "We have to pass the bill [Obamacare] so that you can find out what is in it."

Today, knowing what we know, we are left with what we used to call a million-dollar question, though it is much more expensive now: How does one defend spending \$1.2 trillion for a health-care overhaul that disincentivizes people to work and that leaves us with 31 million uninsured?

One writes poetry.

Hot Air

[Jonathan Turley: The left's indifference to Obama's executive power grabs is beginning to border on a cult of personality.](#)

by Allahpundit

“Beginning”?

There's nothing here that you haven't heard before if you watched him [testify](#) before [Congress](#) in December but it's still worth watching for two reasons. One is his tone, which has grown darker and more apocalyptic since then. More than once here he warns that Obama's "enablers" are destined to rue the fact that they remained silent "during this period." Precedents are being set that will be built on by future presidents of both parties; for all the complaining about executive overreach by Democrats circa 2006 and Republicans today, the cold realities of power are what they are. I'm tempted to say that it was O's latest unlawful delay to ObamaCare's employer mandate that soured Turley's mood, but I don't think that's it. I think it was the State of the Union, where Obama embraced bypassing Congress as formal policy. Look out for the phrase "borders on authoritarianism."

The other reason to watch is his debunking near the end of the "power of the purse" strategy to check Obama. [Mike Lee](#) told the Weekly Standard two days ago that that's the way he thinks Congress should rein in the president: They're not going to roll the political dice on impeachment and they can't sue for lack of standing, but they can go ahead and cut off Obama's money in areas where he's exceeded his constitutional boundaries — in theory. The problem with that approach, says Turley, is that O's not above unilaterally moving money around that's been appropriated for other purposes. Congress can't use the "power of the purse" if it doesn't meaningfully enjoy that power either. So let me repeat a recommendation I made once before: The GOP should introduce a constitutional amendment broadening the legal parameters of standing so that citizens can sue the president for violating separation of powers. The precise language of that amendment would require hard thought; draft it too loosely and the executive branch will be sued for every move it makes, whether clearly constitutional or not. But the status quo, where Congress is effectively powerless to stop the president from making the rules up as he goes along, can't go on. If you can't get the votes for the amendment in Congress now, that's okay — these things take time, and it'll be useful at least to have Democrats on record as opposing limits on executive power. But get the ball rolling.

NPR

[The Full-Fat Paradox: Whole Milk May Keep Us Lean](#)

by Allison Aubrey

I have to admit, I melt at the creaminess of full-fat yogurt.

It's an indulgence that we're told to resist. And I try to abide. (Stealing a bite of my daughter's YoBaby doesn't count, does it?)

The reason we're told to limit dairy fat seems pretty straight forward. The extra calories packed into the fat is bad for our waistlines. That's the assumption.

But what if dairy fat isn't the dietary demon we've been led to believe? New research suggests we may want to look anew.

Consider the findings of two recent studies that conclude the consumption of whole fat dairy is linked to reduced body fat.

In one [paper](#), published by Swedish researchers in the *Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care*, middle-aged men who consumed high-fat milk, butter and cream were significantly less likely to become obese over a period of 12 years compared to men who never or rarely ate high-fat dairy.

Yep, that's right. The butter and whole-milk eaters did better at keeping the pounds off.

"I would say it's counter-intuitive," says [Greg Miller](#), executive vice president of the National Dairy Council.

The second [study](#), published in the *European Journal of Nutrition*, is a meta-analysis of 16 observational studies. There has been a hypothesis that high-fat dairy foods contribute to obesity and heart disease risk, but the reviewers concluded that the evidence does not support this hypothesis. In fact, the reviewers found that in most of the studies, high-fat dairy was associated with a *lower* risk of obesity.

"We continue to see more and more data coming out [finding that] consumption of whole-milk dairy products is associated with reduced body fat," Miller says.

It's not clear what might explain this phenomenon. Lots of folks point to the satiety factor. The higher levels of fat in whole milk products may make us feel fuller, faster. And as a result, the thinking goes, we may end up eating less.

Or the explanation could be more complex. "There may be bio-active substances in the milk fat that may be altering our metabolism in a way that helps us utilize the fat and burn it for energy, rather than storing it in our bodies," Miller says.

Whatever the mechanism, this association between higher dairy fat and lower body weight appears to hold up in children, too.

As we [reported](#) last year, a study of children published in the *Archives Of Diseases in Childhood*, a sister publication of the *British Medical Journal*, concluded that low-fat milk was associated with more weight gain over time.

"It really surprised us," study author Mark DeBoer, a pediatrician at the University of Virginia, told us.

So, where does this leave us, the *rule-followers*, who have complied with the skim-milk-is-best edict?

Well, opinions differ. The recommendations that led to the fat-free dairy boom were, in part, born out of concerns about cholesterol.

Whole-milk dairy products are relatively high in saturated fat. And eating too much saturated fat can increase the risk of heart disease. So many experts would agree that adults with high cholesterol should continue to limit dairy fat.

But it's also becoming clear that there are benefits to full-fat dairy too, at least for some consumers.

As we've [reported](#), in addition to the body weight association, organic whole milk contains beneficial omega-3 fatty acids.

It's unclear whether more people are opting for whole milk products. Though non-fat and low-fat are still dominating dairy sales, the organic sector is experiencing an uptick in whole-fat sales.

"We definitely in the last few years are seeing a trend toward the whole fat products," [George Siemon](#), CEO of the farmer-owned Organic Valley, told us. His company's sales of whole-fat milk are up 10 percent, he says. And sales of skim milk have trailed off. Also, there's been a [boom in butter sales](#).

So, stay tuned. Though it's a *sounds-too-good-to-be-true* finding, researchers are continuing to investigate how dairy fat may help people control their weight.

IBD

[Late Night](#)

by Andrew Malcolm

Letterman: The main Sochi hotel for the Olympics I think is called the Two Seasons. Instead of a little chocolate on your pillow, the Russian maids leave a potato.

Conan: Twelve new events at this Winter Olympics. The new events include women's ski jumping, luge team relay and finding a working toilet.

Fallon: Did you see the Sochi Olympics Opening Ceremony? There was a massive fireworks display. And that was just when someone plugged a hairdryer in at the hotel.

Conan: We just had Groundhog Day. The groundhog came out, saw five minutes of the Super Bowl and then went right back into his hole.

Leno: Was that the worst Super Bowl ever? Colorado fans went straight from recreational marijuana to medicinal marijuana.

Leno: The Broncos just could not move the ball. The last time I saw a Bronco move that slow was in LA and OJ was in it.

Conan: That was the most-watched Super Bowl in history. A big hit with fans of both football and whatever the Broncos were playing.

Conan: Bill Gates is stepping down as chairman of Microsoft. He starts working at the Gap next Tuesday.

Conan: FDA is trying to scare teens from smoking with new ads. Probably the most terrifying is the one that says, "Smoking: It's What Your Parents Do After Sex."

Letterman: That Super Bowl was great, wasn't it? Until the kickoff.

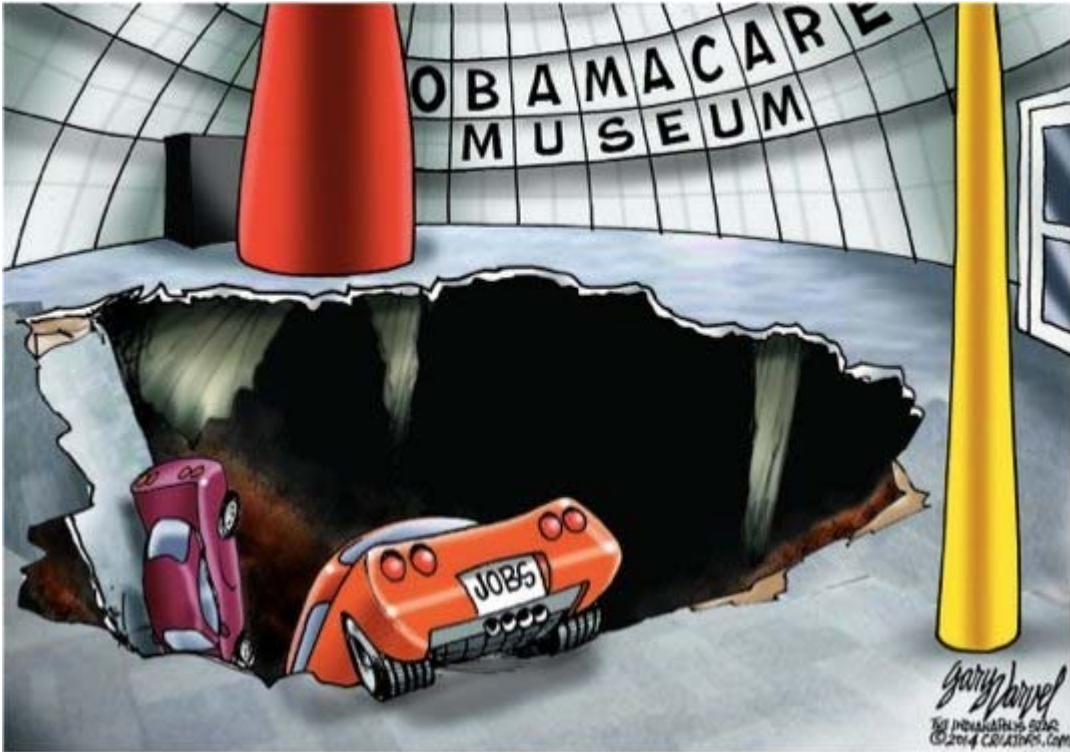
Letterman: The Super Bowl pregame festivities go on and on, get longer every year. After four hours I got worried and called my doctor.

Letterman: Those Super Bowl ads cost \$4 million for a 30-second commercial. I'm telling you, it's like a Kardashian marriage.

Letterman: Let's face it. That Super Bowl was a boring game. Next year they're talking about bringing in Tina Fey and Amy Poehler.

His last one: Leno: Tonight's our last show after 22 years. So much has happened in that time. You know the saddest part is OJ never found the real killers.





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ObamaCare Rx

Take
2 ASPIRIN
& call
me in the
MORNING.



Take
2 ASPIRIN
& call me
in 2013.



Take
2 ASPIRIN
& call the
exchange on
OCTOBER 1st.



Take
2 ASPIRIN
& call your
employer in
2016.



Call
HILLARY
;))



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UH-OH...
THE BOSS IS
GOIN' ALL
"HEISENBERG"
AGAIN.

