

March 18, 2014

Michael Barone posts on the public trust that has been lost by this president.

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*How does a president re-establish the bonds of trust with most voters after they have snapped? That's a question facing Barack Obama right now.*

Editors of the Orange County Register call Sebelius a serial liar.

*Sebelius keeps revising her script on the success of the Affordable Care Act.*

*Every time Kathleen Sebelius testifies before Congress, President Obama's secretary of health and human services reminds us why she is unfit for her Cabinet post: She is a serial dissembler.*

*The latest example is her appearance this week before the House Ways and Means Committee. ...*

Dana Milbank on why the millennials have abandoned the administration and will cause the collapse of healthcare legislation.

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*The next night, after Obama's victory celebration in Des Moines, Obama strategist Steve Hildebrand spotted me in a crowd. "The kids showed up!" he said fiercely.*

*They did. But where are they now?*

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- *A one year delay to the employer mandate.*
- *An additional year delay for medium-sized businesses.*

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*What should particularly alarm Democrats is that Ms. Sink, who was not in Congress in 2010 and therefore did not cast a vote in favor of the Affordable Care Act, ran what Democrats considered a “textbook” campaign when it came to dealing with ObamaCare. She said she wanted to fix it, not repeal it; and she attempted to paint Jolly as a right-wing extremist on abortion, Social Security privatization, and in wanting to repeal ObamaCare. And yet she lost.*

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## Examiner

### Obamacare snaps the bonds of trust between the people and the president

by Michael Barone

During all of his first term, even as his job approval ratings tumbled in 2010 and 2011, more voters expressed positive than negative personal feelings toward [Barack Obama](#). This was a source of strength that helped him overcome opposition to some of his policies, notably Obamacare, in the 2012 presidential election.

But now voters seem to be souring on him personally. Evidence comes from the [NBC/Wall Street Journal poll](#) released Wednesday. It shows the percentages expressing "very" or "somewhat" positive feelings and "very" or "somewhat" negative feelings toward Obama in NBC/WSJ polls going back to February 2009. In the following chart I set out the averages of those expressing positive and negative feelings over stated periods.

Date range	Very or somewhat positive	Very or somewhat negative
January - October 2012	49 percent	41 percent
December 2012 - January 2013	52 percent	39 percent
February - October 7-9, 2013	47 percent	41 percent
Oct. 25-28, 2013 - March 2014	42 percent	45 percent

It’s a pretty clear picture. Throughout the campaign year, 49 percent of people had favorable feelings to Obama, a number basically mirrored in the 51 people of the popular vote he won in November. Between the election and his second inaugural ceremony, Obama enjoyed a somewhat higher personal rating, an afterglow, as tends to happen when a president is re-elected. Through the first nine months of 2013 more voters express positive than negative feelings, though by a slightly reduced margin as compared to the campaign year. Then, in mid-October, as the fiasco of the Obamacare rollout reverberated and Obama was forced to admit that his promise that

you could keep your insurance and your doctor were false, something snapped. Then, a plurality had negative feelings and only 42 percent expressed positive feelings.

How does a president re-establish the bonds of trust with most voters after they have snapped? That's a question facing Barack Obama right now.

## **Orange County Register - Editorial** **[Moving the Obama-care goal posts](#)**

Sebelius keeps revising her script on the success of the Affordable Care Act.

Every time Kathleen Sebelius testifies before Congress, President Obama's secretary of health and human services reminds us why she is unfit for her Cabinet post: She is a serial dissembler.

The latest example is her appearance this week before the House Ways and Means Committee.

Rep. Jim Renacci, an Ohio Republican, reminded her of the benchmark she set in September to adjudge the success of the Obamacare insurance exchanges. "Success," she said, "looks like at least 7 million people having signed up by the end of March 2014."

Rep. Renacci noted that open enrollment ends two weeks from now and that sign-ups are well short of 7 million. So, the lawmaker asked Ms. Sebelius, "What do you now call success?"

The HHS secretary denied she said 7 million sign-ups was the benchmark for Obamacare success. She maintained that what she really said was, "Success looks like millions of people with affordable health coverage." Obamacare will meet that supposed goal "by the end of March in the private marketplace," she said. "So, we will have, I think, a successful program."

When a public official can get away with disavowing past statements, as Ms. Sebelius did this week, when that official can get away with revising established benchmarks, as she also did, she achieves the equivalent of turning a sow's ear into a silk purse.

That's been the HHS secretary's pattern.

Indeed, following Obamacare's disastrous rollout in October, she told an audience in Austin, Texas, that, had it been left up to her, the glitchy healthcare.gov website would have been subjected to "a lot more testing." Alas, she said, "We did not have the luxury of that, and the law said the go-time was Oct. 1."

But that's not what the law said, as our friends at Townhall.com reported in October. The Affordable Care Act actually said the enrollment period would be "as determined by the secretary." So Ms. Sebelius set the Oct. 1 launch date.

Then there was her response to a question posed to her during what she thought would be a friendly interview with Jon Stewart, host of "The Daily Show" on Comedy Central.

Mr. Stewart thought it unfair that Ms. Sebelius gave businesses a one-year delay before Obamacare took effect for them, while not giving individuals the same delay. “Would you say that’s a legitimate criticism?” he asked.

But “they can” get a delay, said the HHS secretary, referring to individuals. “They pay a fine at the end of the year, but they don’t have to. They can say, ‘I don’t want to do it.’”

Mr. Stewart was unsatisfied with Ms. Sebelius’ response. “Maybe she’s just lying to me,” he told his viewing audience during his end-of-show monologue.

And that’s how we feel whenever we read the latest Obamacare report from HHS, or listen to the latest testimony from the HHS secretary on Capitol Hill. We don’t know whether the numbers, the declarations are trustworthy.

The American people deserve the unvarnished truth about the president’s health care reform. That’s why Congress should task the Congressional Budget Office or some independent body to prepare a comprehensive assessment of where Obamacare stands at the end of the enrollment period.

## **Washington Post**

### **[Why millennials have abandoned Obama](#)**

by Dana Milbank

The day before the Iowa caucuses in 2008, [I wrote about the massive crowds of young people at Barack Obama rallies](#), noting that his candidacy would collapse “if they don’t show up.”

The next night, after Obama’s victory celebration in Des Moines, Obama strategist Steve Hildebrand spotted me in a crowd. “The kids showed up!” he said fiercely.

They did. But where are they now?

An army of 15 million voters under 30 swept Obama past Hillary Clinton and John McCain and to the presidency in 2008. More than 12 million helped him return in 2012. But now his presidency is on the line — and the Obama youth are abandoning him in his hour of need.

The administration announced last week that only [1.08 million people ages 18 to 34 had signed up for Obamacare](#) by the end of February, or about 25 percent of total enrollees. If the proportion doesn’t improve significantly, the result likely will be fatal for the Affordable Care Act.

The administration had said it needed 40 percent of registrants in the health insurance exchanges to be young adults, or about 2.7 million of the [expected 7 million total](#). Overall enrollment is also below target. But the alarming shortcoming is the number of young participants, which would make the insured population older and sicker and the program too expensive.

This week saw the release of [Obama’s sit-down with comedian Zach Galifianakis](#), of “The Hangover” fame, to encourage the young to join the Obamacare exchanges. It was good comedy

(the host, in the White House Diplomatic Reception Room, rolled up his sleeve to show Obama his “spider bites”), and according to the White House it had the desired result: [a boost in traffic to HealthCare.gov](#). Yet the fact that Obama sought Galifianakis’s help was an indication of how much the president’s standing has slipped among young Americans. Six years earlier, he had been a demigod among that demographic.

What went wrong? The president and his aides failed to keep his youth movement engaged. But part of the problem also is the inability of the millennial generation to remain attached to a cause. The generation that brought Obama to power is connected online but has no loyalty to institutions — including, it turns out, the Obama White House.

In 2008, “the level of innovation and engagement in the election, especially the primaries, was amazing, but then the level of engaging them during the administration was extremely disappointing,” says [Peter Levine, a Tufts University professor](#) who specializes in youth civic involvement. “He had a potential army for legislative success and implementation, but the Obama administration did not do that. At a critical moment in the first term, they did not turn to them. □. □. □. They got rapid youth demobilization.”

Young voters, [after playing a big role in the campaign](#), became little more than an e-mail list for the White House and [Obama’s Organizing for Action](#) group. Then came health-care reform. The millennials, very liberal overall, saw Obama’s plan as too timid; they were disillusioned by his failure to fight for the “public option” of government-run health plans.

This cost Obama the young activists he would need to rally enrollment in Obamacare. Polling by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center found that, while the generation looks more favorably on big-government solutions than do older generations, [the millennials disapprove of Obamacare](#) in the same proportion as the rest of the population.

Even if Obama had worked harder to keep his youth army engaged, it’s not entirely clear that the effort would have succeeded. As a group, the generation’s attachment is fickle.

A [Pew survey of the generation](#), released earlier this month, found the 18-to-33 crowd less attached than older generations to organized politics and religion, less patriotic, less eager to marry and less trusting of people. Only 49 percent say the phrase “a patriotic person” describes them very well, compared to percentages ranging from 64 percent to 81 percent for older generations.

The millennials are at least as passionate as earlier generations and more entrepreneurial, but they lack ties to institutions — unions, political parties, churches — because of their online existence. “The organizational structure they’re growing up in is so weak,” Tufts’ Levine tells me. As a result, “there aren’t very many durable institutions that can capitalize on their enthusiasm. They’re being asked to do it themselves, online, and it’s a tall order.”

Asking them to pay money to join a health-care exchange, it seems, is too tall an order — even though the presidency they created depends on it.

## Fox News

### ObamaCare: The impossible enforcement of an unworkable law

by Jay Sekulow

Does “ObamaCare” truly exist? Are we actually living with the law that was passed with so much fanfare four years ago?

I had to ask myself that question while reviewing the New York Times list of unilateral ObamaCare changes, a list that chronicles ObamaCare’s utter failure. Some highlights:

- A one year delay to the employer mandate.
- An additional year delay for medium-sized businesses.

Even the ideologues at HHS understand that the law won’t work, that it can’t work, and that the American people simply won’t stand for its full implementation.

- A one year grace period (no, make that three years) for non-compliant plans.
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The list can (and does) go on, and it doesn’t even include the recent, significant change to the Individual Mandate that [the Wall Street Journal says](#) “quietly repeals the individual purchase rules for two more years.”

How? By broadening the “hardship” exemptions significantly and then requiring proof of hardship by documentation only “if possible.”

In other words, if you claim hardship, it looks like the Obama administration is planning to take your word for it.

To be clear, if any Republican tried to force these changes on ObamaCare – changes that go far beyond the changes Republicans tried to force when the Obama administration shut down the government to preserve the alleged “law of the land” – they would be accused of sabotage or worse.

Yet President Obama is executing a rolling, piecemeal repeal of his “signature” legislation – unilaterally, without congressional cooperation or oversight. He’s made at least 20 changes directly to an ever-changing law that’s constantly being amended through executive overreach.

Why?

Because even the ideologues at HHS understand that the law won’t work, that it can’t work, and that the American people simply won’t stand for its full implementation.

So far, the main effect of the partial implementation of ObamaCare has been to needlessly complicate (and increase the costs of) our already complicated and costly health care system. It certainly hasn’t put much of a dent in the number of uninsured Americans.

Gallup says the number of uninsured [dropped very slightly](#) from 17.1% of Americans to 15.9% -- a result so insignificant that it's close to the poll's 1% margin of error and [still 1.5% higher](#) than the number of uninsured when President Obama took office.

Did you catch that? Almost four years after ObamaCare was signed into law – rammed through Congress via procedural trickery and against the will of the majority of Americans – [a higher percentage of Americans are uninsured](#) than before the law was passed.

How could this happen?

Aren't we hearing optimistic reports from Obama administration apologists that the exchanges are fixed and millions of Americans are signing up?

It turns out that of the few million people that have enrolled for ObamaCare on the exchanges, the [vast majority were already insured](#).

And then there's this: the [Obama administration](#) still won't reveal how many enrollees have actually paid for their plans. HHS Secretary [Kathleen Sebelius](#) just told Congress she does not know.

Imagine if President Obama had made this sales pitch in 2009 when he was pressing the Democratically-controlled Congress to pass ObamaCare:

“My fellow Americans, I'm going to pass a health care law that will require millions of you to switch your health plans to a government-approved plan. For many of you, this plan will cost much more and have higher deductibles. When I finally get around to enforcing it on your employers, expect to see higher costs there as well. I'm doing this in the hopes that a small percentage of the uninsured can be coaxed into signing up. But we can't be sure until we try, so let's overhaul the whole system.”

But that's what ObamaCare is – an overhaul of our health care system (and, by extension, much of our economy) built around an unrealistic hope.

It is perhaps too harsh to say that nothing is really working about ObamaCare. By the standards of the federal bureaucracy, the HHS is quite efficient at drafting, and then working with the Department of Justice to enforce draconian regulations that infringe upon the most basic religious liberties of both for-profit and non-profit employers, requiring them to purchase potential abortifacients for their employees.

The Obama administration can't enforce its own deadlines and mandates, but it can put the [Little Sisters of the Poor and Hobby Lobby](#) in its crosshairs with remarkable speed.

Finally, it's becoming clear that the Obama administration is intending to delay the full implementation of ObamaCare until after the president leaves office, leaving his successor with a series of nearly-impossible challenges.

I would expect even the Democratic presidential candidates will have to campaign on reform, with some potentially advocating single-payer as the only way to fix the mess.



Republicans, of course, have the satisfaction of knowing they were right all along – ObamaCare was the wrong answer. But that’s cold comfort as our health insurance costs skyrocket and our choices narrow.

The political challenge of “repeal” will eventually give way to the policy challenge of “replace,” -- the struggle to fix that which can’t easily be fixed.

Going back to the question I asked at the beginning of this piece, “does ObamaCare truly exist?” Not yet. Not really. And it never should.

Our health care system can’t take much more of this president’s “reform.”

*Jay Sekulow is the Chief Counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice*

## Contentions

### [Barack Obama, Political Wrecking Ball](#)

by Peter Wehner

By now it’s settled on most people, including Democrats, that the loss of Alex Sink to David Jolly in Florida’s 13th Congressional District was, [in the words of the New York Times](#), “devastating” to Democrats. It’s a district Ms. Sink carried in her unsuccessful race for governor against Rick Scott, a district that Barack Obama carried in his two elections, and a district that demographically now favors Democrats. In addition, Ms. Sink raised more money and ran a better campaign than Jolly. Even Bill Clinton lent his efforts to her campaign. And yet she lost.

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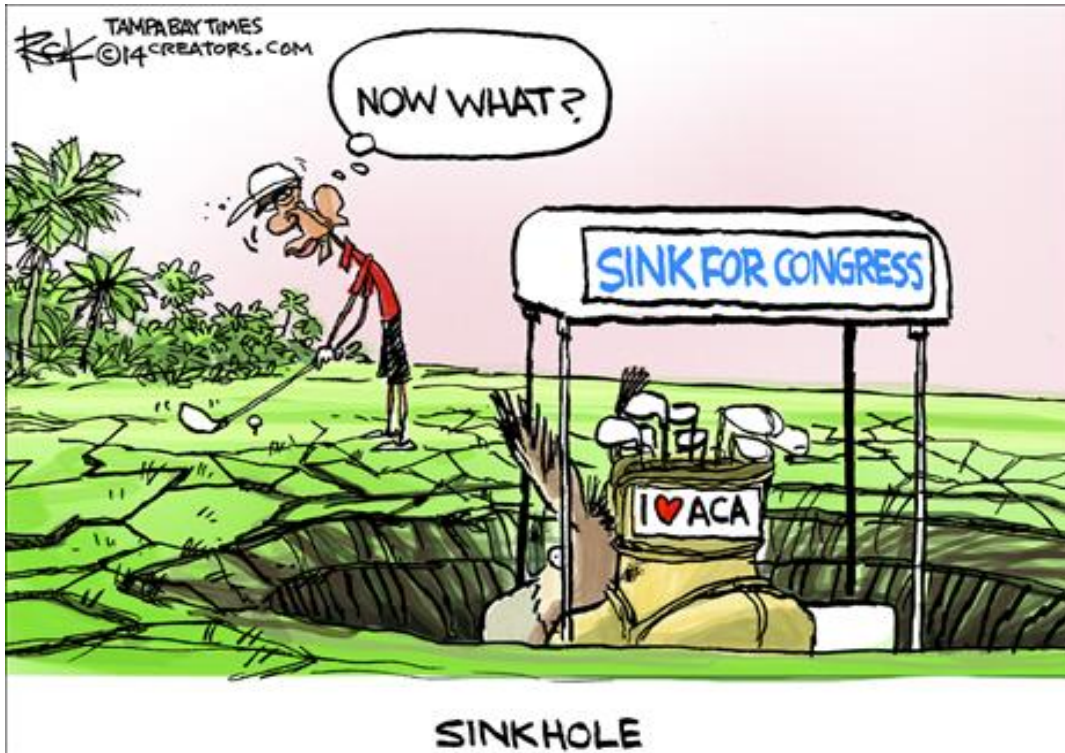
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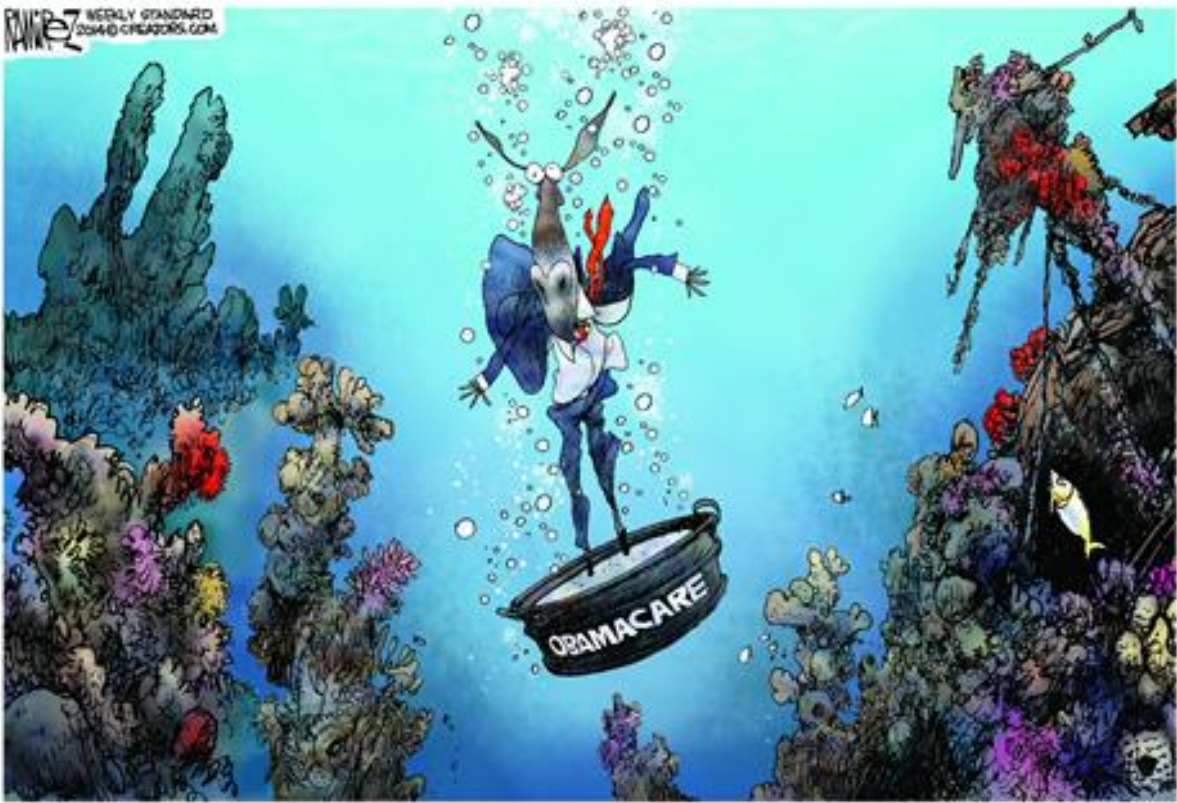
The evidence is scattered all around us, from the epic defeat Democrats suffered in the 2010 midterm, to the (likely) lashing that awaits them in 2014, to collapsing trust and confidence in the federal government, to an agenda that is unpopular virtually across the board. Add to that the rising disorder and chaos in the world that is the predictable result of Mr. Obama’s disengaged and impotent foreign policy.

The American people, having lived with the Obama presidency for more than five years, have come to the conclusion—later, I think, than they should have—that he is incompetent, weak, and untrustworthy. And that judgment is directed not just at Mr. Obama; it is implicating his entire party.

Barack Obama produced a health-care proposal that was a liberal dream for a half-century. It is a bitter irony for him, and a predictable result for many of us, that having achieved it, it may well set back the cause of liberalism for years to come.

Liberals wanted Mr. Obama. Now they have him. And now they may be undone by him.





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TRUTH IS IF YOU YOUNG INVINCIBLES  
DON'T OVERPAY FOR HEALTH CARE,  
LIKE YOU DO FOR YOUR CELL  
PHONE BILLS, WE CAN'T COVER  
THE OLD-AND-SICK.

WE THOUGHT YOU WERE  
GOING TO SHARE OTHER  
PEOPLE'S WEALTH.



BETWEEN TWO FERNS