

April 22, 2014

Jason Riley interviews Robert Woodson, a black conservative, and we get a look at what policies might have been pursued if we had a president who was not a left ideologue.

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Recent remarks from Rep. **Paul Ryan** of Wisconsin? Nope. That's Jesse Jackson in 1976.

Bob Woodson reads the quote when I ask him to respond to the backlash over Mr. Ryan's telling a radio interviewer last month that there is "this tailspin of culture in our inner cities, in particular of men not working and just generations of men not even thinking about working or learning the value and the culture of work; and so there's a real culture problem here that has to be dealt with."

Robert L. Woodson Sr. is a no-nonsense black conservative who heads the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise and knows a thing or two about that culture, the nation's inner cities and Mr. Ryan.

"Paul approached me about a year ago," says Mr. Woodson, sitting recently in his Washington office. "He knows we have groups all across the country that deal with the plight of the poor. He asked me to take him on a listening tour. He said, 'I'd like to learn about the alternatives to what we're already doing, and I know you've been involved in assisting people at the local level.' "

Mr. Woodson agreed but warned that there would be a time commitment. "I said to his staff, 'I don't do drive-bys, so he's got to give me an entire day.' If you're serious, you'll put in the time. And he did. I've taken him now on 12 trips—all to high-crime, drug-infested neighborhoods. And he was not just touched but blown away by what he saw."

Rather than trying to bring the country together, **Bernard Goldberg** says the president spends his time stoking resentments.

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Here are a few reasons ...

With the midterm elections approaching, Mr. Obama has been trying to energize his base with some old, often reliable standbys. There's the supposed Republican war on women, for one. Republicans, we're told, are against a higher minimum wage and against equal pay for equal work legislation – because, well because, they're pro-business anti-women.

Never mind that hiking the minimum wage would cost the economy hundreds of thousands of jobs – that according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office.

As for the Paycheck Fairness Act, the GOP put out a statement saying it's already illegal to discriminate on the basis of gender, adding that, "This law will not create 'equal' pay, but it will make it nearly impossible for employers to tie compensation to work quality, productivity and experience, reduce flexibility in the workplace, and make it far easier to file frivolous lawsuits that line the pockets of trial lawyers."

And this is what Ruth Marcus, the columnist at the Washington Post wrote about the Democrats' war on women strategy:

"The level of hyperbole — actually, of demagoguery — that Democrats have engaged in here is revolting. It's entirely understandable, of course: The Senate is up for grabs. Women account for a majority of voters. They tend to favor Democrats. To the extent that women — and in particular, single women — can be motivated to turn out in a midterm election, waving the bloody shirt of unequal pay is smart politics. Fairness is another matter."

Ms. Marcus, by the way, is no conservative. When liberals start saying such things, you know Mr. Obama and his party will do just about anything to take the voters' minds off of other things, like the weak economy and ObamaCare. ...

... Mr. Obama also spoke to Sharpton's group, telling them that Republicans want to take their civil rights away. "The stark, simple truth is this," the president said: The right to vote is threatened today in a way that it has not been since the Voting Rights Act became law nearly five decades ago." Why? Because those racist Republicans want voter ID laws.

So should we be surprised when even the great Hank Aaron, who broke Babe Ruth's all-time home run record 40 years ago, compares Republicans to the Ku Klux Klan?

"Sure, this country has a black president, but when you look at a black president, President Obama is left with his foot stuck in the mud from all of the Republicans with the way he's treated," Aaron told USA Today. "We have moved in the right direction, and there have been improvements, but we still have a long ways to go in the country. The bigger difference is that back then they had hoods. Now they have neckties and starched shirts." ...

Jonathan Tobin says not all the healthcare horror stories are lies.

Last Thursday, President Obama used the announcement that there were now eight million people signed up for ObamaCare as the excuse for yet another touchdown dance celebrating what he touted as the success of his signature health-care law. The president's boasts were as unfounded as the numbers are bogus. As I wrote then, not only are the figures for enrollment untrustworthy because so many of those being counted have not paid for their insurance, but they also include many Americans who lost their insurance because of the law and are now saddled with higher costs and coverage that doesn't suit their needs. These ObamaCare losers may well equal or outnumber the number of those who have actually benefited from it. Even more to the point, the administration's delays of many of the provisions of the law have put off the negative impact it will have on jobs and the economy until after the midterm elections.

Americans are bracing for massive health-care cost increases next year. Stories about the hardships faced by many individuals and companies as a result of ObamaCare have been cited by

the law's critics. But the president has denounced them, and other Democratic apologists such as Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid have claimed they are falsehoods or outright inventions cooked up by the Koch brothers and other conservatives. The truth, however, is not hard to discover. After reading the piece I wrote last week about the president's claims, one Connecticut businessman (who wishes to remain anonymous) whom I know wrote to me to tell the story of his company's experience with the law and the way his representatives in Washington had responded to his complaints. Here is his story: ...

More on healthcare from [Tobin](#).

... To speak of the debate being over now isn't merely wishful thinking on the president's part. It's a conscious effort to both deceive and distract the American public from the very real problems associated with the misnamed Affordable Care Act. Try as he might, more boasts and attempts to shut up opponents won't end this debate or ensure ObamaCare's survival.

The problem with the eight million figure is the same as the seven million number he celebrated earlier in the month. We still don't know how many of these signups are mere computer forms and how many are paid insurance policies. A conservative estimate is that at least 20 percent of them are not paid and thus shouldn't be counted. Nor is there any credible assurance that most of those being counted are people who didn't have insurance prior to ObamaCare. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that, far from being satisfied customers whose enrollment constitutes an endorsement of the plan, many are people who lost existing insurance plans because of the advent of ObamaCare and have been forced onto the scheme where they find themselves paying for more expensive policies that aren't what they wanted in the first place. ...

[The Examiner editors](#) write on the politics of lies.

That was quite a victory dance [President Obama](#) did Thursday while claiming Obamacare is "working" because [eight million people](#) have now supposedly signed up for the [health care program](#). He even indulged in some less-than-subtle mockery of Republicans - and by extension the majority of Americans who have disapproved of Obamacare since before it became law. "The repeal debate is and should be over," Obama said, taking a dig at Republicans who are "going through, you know, the stages of grief ... anger and denial and all that stuff ..."

But a president who is viewed by most Americans as [less than honest](#) has no business crowing about a victory that remains anything but obvious. And he certainly should not heap insults on people who for four years have profoundly disagreed with him on the wisdom of [Obamacare](#). To put this as "less than honest" is to be charitable. What Fox News found in its [most recent public opinion survey](#) was that 61 percent of Americans believe Obama "lies" about important public issues either "most of the time" or "some of the time." No other president in living memory has conducted himself in a manner that warranted even asking if such a description was appropriate.

...

[Scott Rasmussen](#) says don't believe the spin, the law is still a loser.

President Barack Obama announced triumphantly that 8 million people selected a private insurance plan through the health care exchanges created by legislation known as Obamacare or the Affordable Care Act. He added his own interpretation of the numbers: "This thing is working."

At the same time, however, Democratic candidates across the country still see the health care law as a drag on their campaigns in the midterm elections. After four years of trying, there is still no evidence that the president's signature piece of legislation has become popular. If the law was really working, and voters were excited about it, Democratic candidates would be talking about it all the time, rather than trying to change the subject.

There's a simple rule to evaluate contradictions like this. When the numbers and the behavior disagree, there's something wrong with the numbers. ...

Just in time for earthday, [Mark Perry](#) tells us the ice coverage of the Great Lakes is 15 times normal.

*... Almost 40% of the Great Lakes are still currently covered with ice, which is far above the median of 2.7% for this time of year. **Global what? ...***

WSJ

[A Black Conservative's War on Poverty](#)

The man who is showing Paul Ryan around poor corners of America talks about the real barriers to upward mobility and the 'poverty Pentagon.'

by Jason L. Riley

Washington

'I know black contractors who have gone out of business because their black workers were not prompt or had negative attitudes. I know black workers who take pride about going to work any hour they feel like it, taking the day off when they feel like it. . . . Many leaders who are black and many white liberals will object to my discussing these things in public. But the decadence in the black community . . . is already in the headlines; the only question is what we should do about it.'

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"Paul approached me about a year ago," says Mr. Woodson, sitting recently in his Washington office. "He knows we have groups all across the country that deal with the plight of the poor. He asked me to take him on a listening tour. He said, 'I'd like to learn about the alternatives to what we're already doing, and I know you've been involved in assisting people at the local level.' "

Mr. Woodson agreed but warned that there would be a time commitment. "I said to his staff, 'I don't do drive-bys, so he's got to give me an entire day.' If you're serious, you'll put in the time. And he did. I've taken him now on 12 trips—all to high-crime, drug-infested neighborhoods. And he was not just touched but blown away by what he saw."

Mr. Woodson believes that the Ryan brouhaha could turn out to be a blessing. "Low-income people haven't been on President Obama's agenda for five years," he says. If this sparks a conversation, all the better, "but we have to have the right conversation."

Mr. Woodson attended the White House announcement in February of the president's My Brother's Keeper initiative, which is aimed at helping disadvantaged young black men. White House concerns about the president's black base of support may be behind this newfound interest in the poor, Mr. Woodson says, "but I don't care. If someone is doing something for political advantage, but it has the consequence of helping people, I don't think we should be critical."

Mr. Woodson was pleasantly surprised by what he saw and heard: "The president had the kind of people I deal with up there with him. He was introduced by a young man who was recently robbed on his way to school. I was also glad to hear him say that there must be a nongovernment approach to the problem, and he assembled private-sector funders."

But optics and rhetoric notwithstanding, Mr. Woodson is skeptical that much will come of the initiative. "My worry and my fear is that the money and resources will go to the same racial grievance groups, the same members of what I call the poverty Pentagon. They'll give it to [Al Sharpton](#) and the others to do what they've been doing for decades, to do what doesn't work—what in fact is making things worse."

Mr. Woodson, who remains fit and energetic at age 76, founded the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise in 1981 after stints at the liberal National Urban League and conservative American Enterprise Institute. He is academically trained but wears his pragmatism on his sleeve. "We go around the country like a Geiger counter, looking at high-crime neighborhoods and asking the questions the poverty industry doesn't.

"If we see that 70% of households are raising children out of wedlock, that means 30% are not. We want to know what the 30% are doing right. How are they raising kids who aren't dropping out of school or on drugs or in jail? We seek them out—we call them the antibodies of the community—and put a microphone on them, and say, 'tell us how you did this.' "

Mr. Woodson says that many poor communities don't need another government program so much as relief from current policies. "For instance, a lot of people coming out of prison have a hard time obtaining occupational licenses," he says. Aspiring barbers, cabdrivers, tree-trimmers, locksmiths and the like, he notes, can face burdensome licensing requirements. Proponents of these rules like to cite public-safety concerns, but the reality is that licensure requirements exist mainly to shut out competition. In many black communities, that translates into fewer jobs and less access to quality goods and services.

Mr. Woodson sees an opportunity here for the GOP to do right by the poor without abandoning its conservative principles or pandering. He points to the successful outreach efforts of former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan and former Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith, two Republicans who worked with local minority communities to push market-driven urban redevelopment and were rewarded politically by blacks for doing so.

To illustrate the difference between his approach to community activism and a liberal's, Mr. Woodson tells me about a pastor in Detroit who wanted to build 50 new homes in a ghetto neighborhood but couldn't find financial backing or insurance. "If he had gone to someone on the left for help, they would have gotten their lawyers to sue the insurance company and the bank for redlining or something. What I did by contrast is arrange a meeting between the insurance executives and the pastor. They saw what he was trying to do, the people in the neighborhood he was employing. They saw someone developing human capital." The insurance company got on board and a bank followed. With financing in place, the homes were built, as was a new restaurant currently run by a man who did 13 years in prison.

"I'm optimistic," says Mr. Woodson, noting that his organization has trained some 2,500 grass-roots leaders in 39 states. "We have the platform. We need the investment. My challenge is to get more conservatives to understand that there are many people who are *in* poverty but not *of* it."

Mr. Woodson is irked that Republicans aren't more entrepreneurial in their outreach efforts, citing Mr. Ryan's mentor, the late Congressman Jack Kemp, as a model. Kemp, a former housing secretary for George H.W. Bush, distinguished himself as a proponent of low-tax urban "enterprise zones" and more privatization of public services.

"The other thing that annoys me," Mr. Woodson continues, "is that too many Republicans, as [economist] Walter Williams has said, abandon old friends to appease old enemies." In the 1990s after black Congressman J.C. Watts denounced Jesse Jackson as a race hustler, House Speaker [Newt Gingrich](#) apologized to Mr. Jackson and invited the reverend to join him at President Clinton's second-term inauguration. "Despite all the help we provided Newt Gingrich, he turned his back on

us and invited Jesse Jackson into his booth," says Mr. Woodson. "Conservatives have to stop validating these people."

But Mr. Woodson saves his most passionate disdain for those on the black left who all but abandon the black poor except to exploit them. "Around 70 cents of every dollar designated to relieve poverty goes not to poor people but to people who serve the poor—social workers, counselors, et cetera," he says. "We've created a poverty industry, turned poor people into a commodity. And the race hustlers play a bait-and-switch game where they use the conditions of low-income blacks to justify remedies"—such as racial education preferences—"that only help middle-income blacks."

Mr. Woodson broke with the traditional civil-rights movement in the 1970s over forced busing. In the Supreme Court's 1954 Brown decision, Chief Justice Earl Warren suggested that all-black classrooms were inherently inferior, and liberals convinced themselves that ending legal segregation wasn't enough. "The left assumes that if you're not for forced integration, then you support segregation, but that's a false dichotomy," Mr. Woodson says. "I believe we should have fought for desegregation, but forced integration is a separate issue, especially in education."

A majority of black parents always opposed this social engineering and said they wanted better neighborhood schools, "but the civil-rights leadership pushed busing for the poor. Of course, none of their kids were on the bus," says Mr. Woodson. To this day, the left's obsession with the racial composition of a school trumps its concern with whether kids are learning.

A recent study from UCLA's Civil Rights Project criticized charter schools for being too racially segregated. Never mind that many of these charters outperform the surrounding neighborhood schools and that excellent all-black schools have long existed and predate Brown. Liberals remain convinced that black children must sit next to white children in order to learn. The Obama Justice Department currently is trying to shut down a Louisiana voucher program for low-income families on the grounds that it may upset the racial balance of public schools in the state.

Mr. Woodson frowns on attempts to dismiss antisocial black behavior as a product of white racism or a biased criminal justice system. "It's cynical and patronizing, and I'd rather be hated than patronized," he says.

He is also an advocate of faith-based remedies for drug and alcohol abuse. "The most effective community leaders that I've seen and worked with all over the country agree that it's transformation and redemption that changes the heart," he says. "They take you into communities and introduce you to hundreds of people who were former drug addicts and criminals, who tell you that prison couldn't change them and a psychiatrist couldn't change them but a religious or spiritual experience did. I don't understand why it works. It's irrational. But it works."

That's pretty much Bob Woodson's guiding philosophy. Do what works, and stop doing what doesn't.

Mr. Riley is a member of The Wall Street Journal editorial board and author of "Please Stop Helping Us: How Liberals Make It Harder for Blacks to Succeed," which will be published by Encounter in June.

Real Clear Politics

President Obama and Stoking Resentments

by Bernard Goldberg

If there's one thing Barack Obama and his political pals know how to do, it's to stoke resentment.

This was a man who told us "There is not a liberal America and a conservative America. There is a United States of America. There is not a black America and a white America, a Latino America, an Asian America, There is a United States of America."

This was a man who spoke eloquently of a new day in America. "The time has come," he said, "to move beyond the bitterness and anger and pettiness that's consumed Washington; to end the political strategy that's been all about division. And instead make it about addition; to build a coalition for change that stretches through red states and blue states."

It's possible, I guess, that Barack Obama meant every word. But I suspect he meant that we could all achieve this wonderful, post-partisan, can't-we-all-just-get-along America if – but only if – Republicans saw things the way he does; only if conservatives jumped on his liberal bandwagon and helped him "fundamentally transform the United States of America" — the way he thought it should be transformed.

I guess one more thing is possible: that he is so enamored with himself that he has no idea why he has become one of the most polarizing political figures in American history.

Here are a few reasons ...

With the midterm elections approaching, Mr. Obama has been trying to energize his base with some old, often reliable standbys. There's the supposed Republican war on women, for one. Republicans, we're told, are against a higher minimum wage and against equal pay for equal work legislation – because, well because, they're pro-business anti-women.

Never mind that hiking the minimum wage would cost the economy hundreds of thousands of jobs – that according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office.

As for the Paycheck Fairness Act, the GOP put out a statement saying it's already illegal to discriminate on the basis of gender, adding that, "This law will not create 'equal' pay, but it will make it nearly impossible for employers to tie compensation to work quality, productivity and experience, reduce flexibility in the workplace, and make it far easier to file frivolous lawsuits that line the pockets of trial lawyers."

And this is what Ruth Marcus, the columnist at the Washington Post wrote about the Democrats' war on women strategy:

"The level of hyperbole — actually, of demagoguery — that Democrats have engaged in here is revolting. It's entirely understandable, of course: The Senate is up for grabs. Women account for a majority of voters. They tend to favor Democrats. To the extent that women — and in particular, single women — can be motivated to turn out in a midterm election, waving the bloody shirt of unequal pay is smart politics. Fairness is another matter."

Ms. Marcus, by the way, is no conservative. When liberals start saying such things, you know Mr. Obama and his party will do just about anything to take the voters' minds off of other things, like the weak economy and ObamaCare.

And how's this for trying to unify the country? Mr. Obama once urged Hispanics to "punish their enemies" — not their political opponents; not the other side; their enemies. He said, "If you've got a business — you didn't build that." He said, "I do think at a certain point you've made enough money." And he's been doing everything but putting mug shots up of those heartless rich Americans who supposedly would rather watch people starve in the street than part with any of their money.

And if it isn't class or gender warfare, then race is always good to get the base riled up before an election.

Just the other day, his close friend, the Attorney General, Eric Holder stoked more resentment, suggesting that he and the president are treated badly — not because of their politics — but because they're black. Speaking to Al Sharpton's National Action Network, Holder said this:

"Forget about me, forget about me. You look at the way the attorney general of the United States was treated yesterday by a House committee — has nothing to do with me, forget that. What attorney general has ever had to deal with that kind of treatment? What president has ever had to deal with that kind of treatment?"

Holder was referring to a combative exchange with a conservative Republican congressman from Texas, Louis Gohmert, during a House Judiciary Committee hearing. Gohmert was complaining that his request for certain documents hadn't been satisfied, suggesting that Holder was playing politics.

Did it occur to Mr. Holder that his intransigence might be the reason he was treated harshly? Did he consider the possibility that the reason Mr. Obama has so many detractors might be his politics — not the color of his skin?

Mr. Obama also spoke to Sharpton's group, telling them that Republicans want to take their civil rights away. "The stark, simple truth is this," the president said: The right to vote is threatened today in a way that it has not been since the Voting Rights Act became law nearly five decades ago." Why? Because those racist Republicans want voter ID laws.

So should we be surprised when even the great Hank Aaron, who broke Babe Ruth's all-time home run record 40 years ago, compares Republicans to the Ku Klux Klan?

"Sure, this country has a black president, but when you look at a black president, President Obama is left with his foot stuck in the mud from all of the Republicans with the way he's treated," Aaron told USA Today. "We have moved in the right direction, and there have been improvements, but we still have a long ways to go in the country. The bigger difference is that back then they had hoods. Now they have neckties and starched shirts."

Yes, black Americans and white Americans have very different histories that have led to some very different perceptions. A legacy of slavery and segregation does things to the psyche. But Eric Holder playing the race card — to an Al Sharpton crowd, no less — and the president joining in a

day later ... none of that helps convince African-Americans, or anybody else, that “there is not a black America and a white America” but only “a United States of America.”

He told us he wanted “to end the political strategy that’s been all about division” — that instead he wanted to “make it about addition” and “build a coalition for change that stretches through red states and blue states.” As we approach the midterm elections of 2014, that Barack Obama is gone. And I suspect he never really existed.

Contentions

[ObamaCare Horror Stories Aren't Lies](#)

by Jonathan S. Tobin

Last Thursday, President Obama used the announcement that there were now eight million people signed up for ObamaCare as the excuse for yet another touchdown dance celebrating what he touted as the success of his signature health-care law. The president’s boasts were as unfounded as the numbers are bogus. [As I wrote then](#), not only are the figures for enrollment untrustworthy because so many of those being counted have not paid for their insurance, but they also include many Americans who lost their insurance because of the law and are now saddled with higher costs and coverage that doesn’t suit their needs. These ObamaCare losers may well equal or outnumber the number of those who have actually benefitted from it. Even more to the point, the administration’s delays of many of the provisions of the law have put off the negative impact it will have on jobs and the economy until after the midterm elections.

Americans are bracing for [massive health-care cost increases next year](#). Stories about the hardships faced by many individuals and companies as a result of ObamaCare have been cited by the law’s critics. But the president has denounced them, and other Democratic apologists such as Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid have claimed they are falsehoods or outright inventions cooked up by the Koch brothers and other conservatives. The truth, however, is not hard to discover. After reading the piece I wrote last week about the president’s claims, one Connecticut businessman (who wishes to remain anonymous) whom I know wrote to me to tell the story of his company’s experience with the law and the way his representatives in Washington had responded to his complaints. Here is his story:

As usual, your column regarding President Obama and the Affordable Care Act was insightful and on target. Here’s a real world example of the future negative effects on businesses and individuals we aren’t likely to hear from the White House.

In November of last year, I met with our health insurance broker and learned that the renewal of our policy for our company’s employees would result in a 53 percent increase in premiums – largely due to increased mandates and other nuances of the Affordable Care Act. We developed a short-term solution by renewing our current policy (pre-ACA) for another year and moving its effective date from January 1, 2014 to December 1, 2013. This adjustment allowed us to avoid the effect of the new ACA requirements that took effect on January 1, 2014. Our premiums under this alternate plan increased, but only by 9%. I realize we’re a small company and this is but a single case. However, our broker indicated this scenario is likely to play out in many organizations next year.

In early January, we sent a letter describing this situation to our Governor, Congressman, and Senators. Finally, last week Senator Chris Murphy responded with what was essentially a staff-drafted form letter. No responses from our other elected officials have been received to date. Sen. Murphy's letter completely ignored our message — specifically that our premiums were about to increase by 53 percent. Instead, the letter claimed, "research indicated the ACA should stabilize and possibly decrease health care premiums for small businesses and individuals."

Silly me, I guess the emperor really does have clothes after all.

As I mentioned, the large increase resulted, in part, from certain mandates not previously covered. However, Connecticut already had a lot of mandated benefits in place (thanks primarily to our state's kind-hearted special interest advocates). The large increase also resulted from a change in the way coverage for dependents will now be rated and priced. Previously, dependents were treated similarly across all age cohorts. Under the ACA, dependent coverage is and will be rated and priced separately for each age – with costs significantly increasing among the 18-26 year age cohorts. So, for people with kids of college age and a few years older, premiums are likely to increase significantly.

The "blame" for this spike can probably be placed more on the insurance industry than specifically the Congressional staffers who drafted the ACA. However, my understanding is the insurance industry was heavily involved with developing the legislation and, of course, the industry was an advocate for the enactment of the ACA. What a surprise that insurers will benefit from the new law.

By backdating its policy, this company saved itself from a devastating increase in 2014. But that won't be possible in 2015 when it and innumerable other small, mid-sized, and large companies will be faced with the enforcement of more ObamaCare mandates. The impact of these increases on the ability of businesses to maintain their level of employment and benefits will be considerable. So, too, will the effect of this massive federal power grab on the economy. Thus, in addition to the millions of individual ObamaCare losers that lost their coverage, in 2015 we will have countless others who will suffer from the law.

All this means that, contrary to the president's claims and demands that critics shut up and do as he says, the debate over ObamaCare is far from over. If anything, as this one businessman seems to be telling us, in 2015 it will just be getting started.

Contentions

[Obama's Boasts Won't End OCare Debate](#)

by Jonathan S. Tobin

Two weeks after he first claimed victory after the ObamaCare enrollment deadline, President Obama was spiking the ball again as he demanded that Republicans stop trying to overturn his signature health-care law in an impromptu press conference. The excuse for [the president's appearance in front of the White House press corps today](#) was the claim that the number of those enrolled in the plan has now exceeded eight million. That figure was, he said, enough to not only stop Democrats from seeking to avoid blame for their responsibility in foisting the unpopular law on an unwilling public but also to effectively silence its many vocal critics:

I think we can agree that it is well past time to move on, as a country...The point is, this debate is and should be over. The Affordable Care Act is working. The American people don't want us re-fighting the battles of the past five years.

But the assumption that the government's successful efforts to pressure or persuade several million people to sign up for ObamaCare means that it is "working" is completely unwarranted. It's not just that the figures put forward by the administration are unreliable for a number of reasons. Even if we assumed that there really were eight million ObamaCare policyholders, the real test of this law's viability and its ability to endure has yet to come. Not until we see just how many of those signed up are young and healthy enough to help pay for the vast number of sick and elderly covered by it will we know if it can pay for itself. And it won't be until next year when the employer mandate and many other more painful provisions of the law are finally implemented that it will be clear whether the entire scheme can survive and how much damage it will inflict on the economy.

To speak of the debate being over now isn't merely wishful thinking on the president's part. It's a conscious effort to both deceive and distract the American public from the very real problems associated with the misnamed Affordable Care Act. Try as he might, more boasts and attempts to shut up opponents won't end this debate or ensure ObamaCare's survival.

The problem with the eight million figure is the same as the seven million number he celebrated earlier in the month. We still don't know how many of these signups are mere computer forms and how many are paid insurance policies. A conservative estimate is that at least 20 percent of them are not paid and thus shouldn't be counted. Nor is there any credible assurance that most of those being counted are people who didn't have insurance prior to ObamaCare. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that, far from being satisfied customers whose enrollment constitutes an endorsement of the plan, many are people who lost existing insurance plans because of the advent of ObamaCare and have been forced onto the scheme where they find themselves paying for more expensive policies that aren't what they wanted in the first place.

The president did point out that it is now believed that 35 percent of those who signed up are young and healthy. That is higher than previous estimates but still below the 40 percent that is thought to be the cutoff point for financial viability. Like the hype about the enrollment numbers, the president is hoping that merely by exceeding expectations he can convince Americans that ObamaCare is here to stay. But when it comes to assessing the law's success or its long-term survival, expectations are irrelevant.

Nor is there any proof that most of those who stand to benefit from the plan—those without insurance or with pre-existing conditions—are actually signing up in the numbers that we were promised. The president's challenge to Republicans to come up with an alternative that will help this segment of the population is an empty one and he knows it. If all the government wanted to do was to cover such persons, they could have done so without creating a massive government power grab that threatens to overturn the health-care industry and hurt almost as many people as it will help.

Moreover, it won't be until next year when the politically motivated delays of the implementation of many of the law's mandates and provisions are put in place that we will know just how serious that damage will be. Nor will we know until then just how massive the cost increases for insurance will be though even the president acknowledged they will go up. With most of the young and healthy uninsured not signing up, rates will skyrocket as companies are forced to pass on the costs of covering those with pre-existing conditions. The president's claims that the rate of increases are

going down won't convince many who will be paying more in the coming years that the president's boasts are justified.

The president is right—at least for the next two and a half years—when he says that ObamaCare can't be repealed. And he's also right that any changes will have to take into account the need to cover those who previously had no insurance. The final verdict on ObamaCare's ability to function and the amount of damage it will do has yet to be heard. But the president is dead wrong to think that merely repeating over and over again that the debate is over will make it so.

Washington Examiner - Editorial **[Barack Obama and the politics of lies](#)**

That was quite a victory dance [President Obama](#) did Thursday while claiming Obamacare is “working” because [eight million people](#) have now supposedly signed up for the [health care program](#). He even indulged in some less-than-subtle mockery of Republicans - and by extension the majority of Americans who have disapproved of Obamacare since before it became law. “The repeal debate is and should be over,” Obama said, taking a dig at Republicans who are “going through, you know, the stages of grief ... anger and denial and all that stuff ...”

But a president who is viewed by most Americans as [less than honest](#) has no business crowing about a victory that remains anything but obvious. And he certainly should not heap insults on people who for four years have profoundly disagreed with him on the wisdom of [Obamacare](#). To put this as “less than honest” is to be charitable. What Fox News found in its [most recent public opinion survey](#) was that 61 percent of Americans believe Obama “lies” about important public issues either “most of the time” or “some of the time.” No other president in living memory has conducted himself in a manner that warranted even asking if such a description was appropriate.

It comes as no surprise today that Obama's defenders are sparing no invective for [Fox News](#) in the wake of that survey. But it was the president, not Fox News, who repeatedly and knowingly misled the American people with two infamous Obamacare lies: “You can keep your health insurance if you like it. Period. You can keep your doctor. Period.” For better or worse, Obama will forever be known as the president who chose repeatedly to propagate two falsehoods. Those two lies were profoundly significant because they were designed to hide the truth about how Obamacare would affect the daily lives and health of hundreds of millions of Americans.

Since it became painfully clear in 2013 that Obama had lied about Obamacare since 2009, it has been increasingly difficult for many Americans to continue accepting at face value his statements on other major public issues. In both the [Benghazi](#) and [IRS scandals](#), for example, Obama claimed to have known nothing about them until they were reported in the national media.

But if that were true, why has the president's [attorney general](#) and so many other of his most prominent appointees withheld thousands of documents subpoenaed by [Congress](#) and requested by journalists under the [Freedom of Information Act](#)? Are there passages in those withheld documents that make it clear Obama knew much more than he has admitted?

Such questions go to the heart of the issue of the president's probity. If he lied about keeping [health insurance plans](#) and doctors, why should fellow citizens believe his claim that nothing else could have been done to save four Americans in Benghazi, or that there isn't "[a smidgen of corruption](#)" at the IRS? That is Obama's legacy and his burden.

Real Clear Politics

Don't Believe the Spin, Obamacare Is Still a Loser

by Scott Rasmussen

President Barack Obama announced triumphantly that 8 million people selected a private insurance plan through the health care exchanges created by legislation known as Obamacare or the Affordable Care Act. He added his own interpretation of the numbers: "This thing is working."

At the same time, however, Democratic candidates across the country still see the health care law as a drag on their campaigns in the midterm elections. After four years of trying, there is still no evidence that the president's signature piece of legislation has become popular. If the law was really working, and voters were excited about it, Democratic candidates would be talking about it all the time, rather than trying to change the subject.

There's a simple rule to evaluate contradictions like this. When the numbers and the behavior disagree, there's something wrong with the numbers.

At one level, of course, it's possible to challenge the 8 million figure itself. As anybody following the story has heard repeatedly, the number includes a decent number of people who haven't paid their premiums and aren't covered. It also includes a number of people who signed up through the exchange only because the health care law took away their previous insurance.

Still, no matter what the final numbers show, at least a few million more people have health insurance now than they did a year ago.

The president's triumphal tone suggests that this is self-evidently good news and reason to celebrate the success of his health care law. He says that candidates from his party should be proud of the law and defend it. But that's not likely to happen, and the reasons are deeper than disputes about how many people actually signed up through a health care exchange.

The first is that many people are finding out that the insurance they bought through an exchange doesn't really ensure they'll get medical care. There have been repeated stories of people finding out that even though they have insurance, they can't find a doctor who will accept it. The Wall Street Journal, for example, reports that residents of New Hampshire's capital city "have to drive to other cities to get covered hospital care." Buying a product that doesn't work is a sure way to create an angry customer.

Additionally, the health care law has created even more angry customers who have found out that they have to change doctors. For some, that's just a minor inconvenience. For others, it's a huge problem.

And, of course, the law is making health insurance more expensive. The head of Aetna, Mark Bertolini, and other industry executives have said they expect to see significant price hikes from the law. That impacts tens of millions of Americans -- including many who were happy with their insurance before Obama's law was passed.

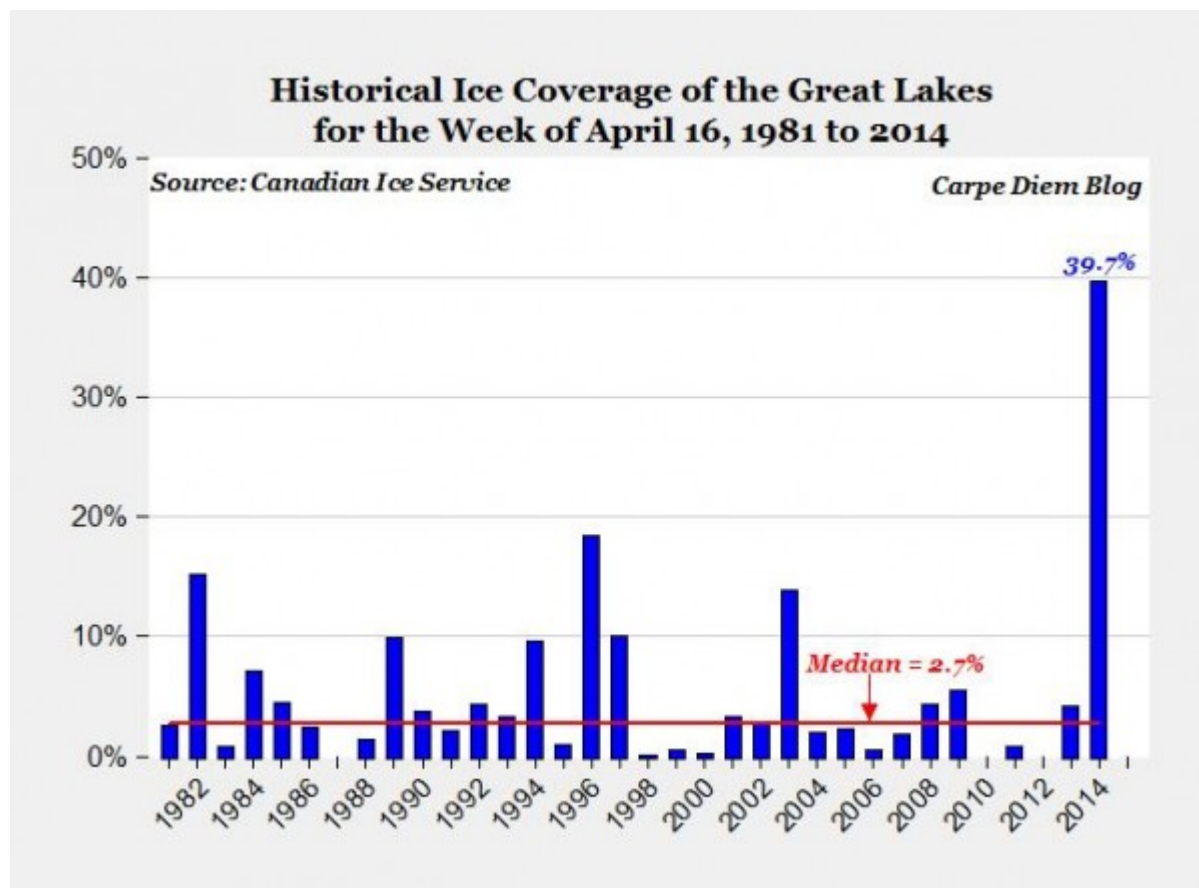
What all of this means is that the president's claim of 8 million enrollees is not something to be dismissed or ignored. But the claim's incomplete and a bit like saying a baseball score is eight. Eight runs in a major league baseball game is a good thing, but you can't really evaluate it unless you know how many runs the other team scored.

And, for the president's health care law, the negatives are still piling up a lot faster than the positives.

American.com

[Just in time for Earth Day, a very inconvenient chart of Great Lakes ice coverage – it's 15X greater than normal for April](#)

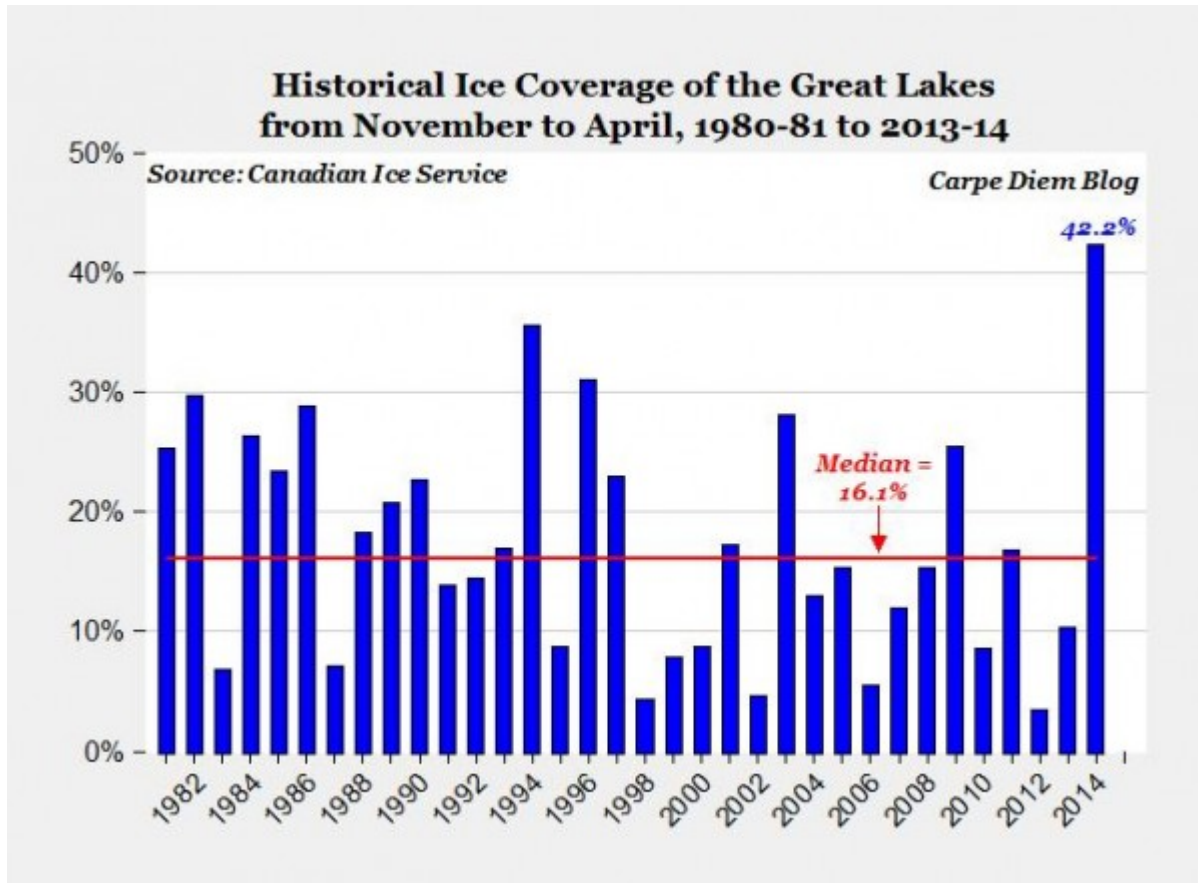
by Mark J. Perry



The chart above is from the [Canadian Ice Service](#) and shows the **percentage ice coverage of the Great Lakes during the week of April 16 for each year from 1981 to 2014**. Almost 40% of the

Great Lakes are still currently covered with ice, which is far above the median of 2.7% for this time of year. **Global what?**

Update: The chart below shows the **total accumulated ice coverage of the Great Lakes over the entire winter season** from November to April for each winter season since 1980-1981. For the most recent winter the Great Lakes had ice coverage 42.4% of the time, which is more than twice the median ice coverage of 16.12% over the last 33 years.



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