



CBO Warns of Health Reform Cost

President Barack Obama has from the beginning insisted that any reform effort must “bend the curve” of government spending that is currently driving the federal budget into the red. This is because the curve of ever-increasing federal spending is shooting skyward, like a roller coaster heading up its track. Democratic attempts to implement Obama’s reform proposal are actually making the coaster’s track curve upward in a steeper climb.



As AP put it: “Asked by Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad, D-N.D., if the evolving legislation would bend the cost curve, the budget director responded that — as things stand now — ‘the curve is being raised.’ ” Elmendorf explained that “in the legislation that has been reported, we do not see the sort of fundamental changes that would be necessary to reduce the trajectory of federal health spending by a significant amount. And on the contrary, the legislation significantly expands the federal responsibility for health care costs.”

AP noted that “even if the legislation doesn’t add to the federal deficit over the next years, Elmendorf said costs over the long run would keep rising at an unsustainable pace.” The White House nonetheless blew off this dire warning. Presidential adviser David Axelrod assured AP that “at the end of the day, we’ll have significant cost controls.”

There appears to be no basis right now for Axelrod’s confidence. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell (Ky.) described Elmendorf’s assessment as “a wake-up call,” and wisely advised that “instead of rushing through one expensive proposal after another, we should take the time we need to get things right.”

“Despite the flashing yellow light from the budget office,” AP said, “the House pushed ahead” with their plans. House Democrats were perhaps encouraged by having won an endorsement from the American Medical Association. Like Axelrod, they were quick to dismiss criticism such as that coming from the insurance industry, which said that the Democrat’s public insurance option “will cause millions of patients to lose their current coverage.” The Democrats’ majority in the House has so far allowed them to keep a fast pace, fending off Republican efforts to eliminate the government-run insurance program and the requirement for employers to provide health insurance.

“I think it would be prudent of the president to be patient and allow us the opportunity to work,” said Senator Olympia Snowe (R-Maine), “I don’t think we should be bound by a timetable that isn’t realistic.” She added that waiting for a September vote would still allow time to finish the legislation in the fall.

Apparently the president and the Democrats in Congress have never considered that if a thing is worth doing, it is worth taking the time to do it right. Except in very unusual and exceptional circumstances, such as foreign invasion, the Founding Fathers of our constitutional republic designed the wheels of government to turn slowly and deliberately, not quickly and haphazardly. They would not have instituted checks and balances if speed of decision making were government’s most important



Written by [Steven J. DuBord](#) on July 18, 2009

objective. A monarchy, a dictatorship, or the majority tyranny of pure democracy would have sufficed to render swift and final pronouncements.

Government of, by, and for “We the People” exists only to protect our life and liberty. May its wheels of deliberation never turn more slowly than when it proposes to infringe upon those very rights while claiming it is for our own good.



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