



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on April 23, 2012

Many Democrats Now Consider ObamaCare a Political Liability

So said former Rep. Artur Davis (D-Ala., left) in an interview with [The Hill](#), explaining why passing ObamaCare was a bad idea — Davis, to his credit, voted against it, though he still ended up losing his 2010 run for Alabama’s governorship in the primary — and why a Supreme Court ruling overturning the law might well sink Obama’s reelection bid as well.



Davis is one of “an increasing number of Democrats,” most of them either former or retiring officeholders, to voice discontent with the healthcare law and its consequences for their party, according to [The Hill](#). “The public grievances have come from centrists and liberals and reflect rising anxiety ahead of November’s elections.”

The first Democrat to express such thoughts openly was Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.), who told *New York* magazine in an interview published on April 15 that [passing ObamaCare was a “mistake”](#) that cost Democrats dearly in the 2010 elections. “I think we paid a terrible price for health care,” the retiring Congressman said. He also suggested that Democrats should have pushed for financial reform first — it arrived a few months after ObamaCare in the form of the Dodd-Frank law — and tackled healthcare in a piecemeal fashion afterward.

Rep. Brad Miller (D-N.C.), who voted for the law, echoed Frank’s sentiments. Miller, who is retiring from Congress, told [The Hill](#), “I think we would all have been better off — President Obama politically, Democrats in Congress politically, and the nation would have been better off — if we had dealt first with the financial system and the other related economic issues and then come back to healthcare.” Instead, he explained, “the administration wasted time and political capital on healthcare reform, resulting in lingering economic problems that will continue to plague Obama’s reelection chances in 2012,” the paper writes.

Another retiring Congressman who voted for ObamaCare, Rep. Dennis Cardoza (D-Calif.), “criticized his party’s handling of the issue, and said he repeatedly called on his leaders to figure out how they were going to pay for the bill, and then figure out what they could afford,” reports [The Hill](#). Cardoza, the newspaper continues, “said he thought the bill should have been done ‘in digestible pieces that the American public could understand and that we could implement’ ” — another observation first offered by Frank.

Sen. Jim Webb (D-Va.) — who, like Miller and Cardoza, voted Aye on ObamaCare and is high-tailing it out of Washington in January — [told](#) guests at an April 18 Bloomberg-hosted breakfast in New York that the healthcare law will be Obama’s “biggest downside” heading into the November elections.



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“I think that the manner in which the health-care reform issue was put in front of the Congress, the way that the issue was dealt with by the White House, cost Obama a lot of credibility as a leader,” Webb remarked, adding that he didn’t think the Obama administration had provided enough direction while Congress was drafting the legislation — a point countered by Rep. Allyson Schwartz (D-Pa.), who told *The Hill* that “the administration was super involved with it.” Schwartz was on the House Ways and Means Committee at the time the law passed Congress.

Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Wash.) agreed that the healthcare law “did hurt us” but said “the party isn’t likely to suffer much more because of the law, regardless of the Supreme Court’s actions,” the newspaper writes. And, yes, Dicks voted for the law and is hanging it up at the end of the 112th Congress.

Leading Democrats who still have a future in the party were more likely to defend ObamaCare. Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), who as chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee in 2010 had a hand in writing the law, “said Obama made the right decision and brushed off the latest round of second-guessing,” according to *The Hill*. In addition, Democratic strategist James Carville and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) have argued that the Supreme Court’s striking down the law would actually *help* Obama in November.

On the other hand, as NewsBusters’ [Matthew Sheffield](#) put it, “the fact that so many retiring members are airing grievances with the law and the dirty way that it was passed in the middle of the night via all sorts of legislative chicanery is surely an indicator that many members running for reelection feel the same way.” Retiring politicians, after all, no longer have any need to toe the party line, while those who wish to remain in Congress and perhaps move up in the ranks are far more constrained in what they dare to utter. Yahoo! Contributor [Roy A. Barnes](#) noted this sad state of affairs in an April 20 commentary: “Our tax dollars go to people whose de facto job description should include spinelessness, while only being honest with folks as they get ready to retire.”

In an appearance on NBC’s *Meet the Press* five days after the Affordable Care Act became law, Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) [declared](#), “I predict that by November those who voted for healthcare will find it an asset and those who voted against it will find it a liability.”

The party of ObamaCare lost big time that November. And judging by retiring legislators’ remarks, that same party, including the President who signed the bill into law, may very well take it on the chin this November, too.



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