



Presidential Candidates in the Year of the Sheep

Gong Hay Fat Choy! [Happy New Year!] The Chinese Year of the Sheep is upon us. Sheep are known for trying to make people happy and being loyal followers. Too many of our elected “leaders” have lived their careers in the Year of the Sheep.

This is also the year where potential presidential candidates surface. The candidates range from the anointed one, establishment insiders, and those pretending not to be insiders, to those on the fringe. All we now know is what the potential candidates have told us about themselves or what the media want us to know about them.



We have learned the hard way that politics is more than a catchy bumper sticker. Remember “Hope and Change”?

Hillary Clinton’s slogan thus far is “I Am Woman.” Clinton has yet to own to any responsibility in the Benghazi murders, and HillaryCare trumps ObamaCare in the government takeover of medical care category. Her Wall Street connections are driving the anti-business crowd to urge non-candidate pro-federal regulation Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren to throw her hat in the ring.

Former Democratic Virginia Senator Jim Webb is a [self-described](#) public servant, warrior, author, and filmmaker. He correctly notes that people want solutions, not rhetoric. His pitch is that he can bring us together, as he spent four years in the Reagan administration.

Former Florida Governor [Jeb Bush](#) was indeed popular but increased spending and supports federal intervention in education. He said on ABC’s *This Week* that Republicans should stop trying to defund ObamaCare and instead let implementation of the law prove that it won’t work. Of course, by then it will be too late.

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker is known for budget cutting and standing up to public-sector unions. He did not buy into the Affordable Care Act’s expansion of Medicaid. Instead he reformed BadgerCare (Wisconsin’s Medicaid) by moving people out of BadgerCare onto the ACA’s marketplace. His goal was to get more people working and fewer people dependent on the government. The media has publicized Walker’s lack of a college degree and his 2010 scandal over apparently urging his employees to post comments promoting him and his record on news websites.

Governor Chris Christie was a breath of fresh air with his assertive no-nonsense style. But New Jersey is not in great economic shape, with high unemployment and a poor credit rating. While stating that he was [“no fan of the Affordable Care Act”](#), Christie felt leadership dictated that he accept federal Medicaid funds to help the state’s low-income residents. After all, the federal government would pay the full cost of Medicaid expansion for three years and 90 percent of the cost after that. But how would he save money as the head of the federal government?

Senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz are engaging speakers and add some diversity. Rubio has said he



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will vote to defund the Affordable Care Act. Cruz's conservative principles are considered solid and by some, extreme.

Having physicians in the mix is encouraging, but not dispositive. Remember Howard Dean. Senator Rand Paul to his credit has opened himself up to traditionally unfriendly crowds. He is clearly in favor of limited government, and against ObamaCare. Neurosurgeon and professor emeritus Ben Carson made it clear at the National Prayer Breakfast that he has no use for ACA. But his lack of political experience may haunt him as he speaks his mind in an unvarnished way.

Two-term Ohio Governor John Kasich [supported Medicaid expansion](#) under ACA even after the legislature issued a line item veto.

Indiana Governor and former Senator Mike Pence has a strong resume, and Indiana has a great economy. Pence pledged to reduce regulations but agreed to Medicaid expansion under the ACA.

Former CEO Carly Fiorina is relatively unknown, and Hewlett Packard did not exactly thrive under her stewardship.

Some retreads include Mike Huckabee, popular with social conservatives, who increased spending and taxes while governor of Arkansas, and former Texas Governor Rick Perry, who performed miserably last time around.

Many others have expressed interest. The more choice the better.

Politics is not for other people; it pertains to us and has a palpable effect on our lives. For example, despite federal expenditures of \$415 billion per year, Medicaid patients have decreased access to care, longer waiting times for appointments than privately insured patients, and more emergency room visits to receive non-urgent care.

Let's make our New Year's resolution to go beyond a superficial look at the candidates. With respect to American medicine, we will not tolerate a politician who would rather listen to a flock of railbirds enamored with regulatory control than meet with committed members of the medical community who have easily implemented alternatives to the current medical care delivery model.

This article was originally published by the [Association of American Physicians and Surgeons](#) and is reprinted here with permission.

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