



Written by [Wallis W. Wood](#) on March 29, 2013

The Republican Shell Game on ObamaCare

Give us a break! That's what Congress finally did on last weekend, when after a marathon session in the Senate, Congressmen all agreed to head out of town for their two-week spring break. So we're safe from their meddlesome efforts until April 8.

But what a show they put on before they left. After arguing most of the night, the Senate finally managed to pass its first budget in four years at 4:56 Saturday morning. The final vote was 50-49, with every Republican opposing it. They were joined by four Democrats: Mark Pryor of Arkansas, Kay Hagan of North Carolina, Mark Begich of Alaska and Max Baucus of Montana. Not so coincidentally, all four are up for re-election next year.



I'll have more to say about the battle of the budgets in a moment. But first I need to comment on two recent Senate votes on Obamacare and the incredible hypocrisy they demonstrated. First, Congressional Republicans declared their unwavering opposition to the badly misnamed Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Then they voted to fund it for the rest of the year.

What the heck's going on here?

Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Mike Lee (R-Utah), two tough young conservatives who defeated more establishment-type Republicans to win election, lived up to their campaign promises to try to end Obamacare. They forced a vote in the Senate on an amendment to defund the program. As expected, the measure lost on a straight party-line vote, with 55 Democrats voting against it and all 45 Republicans in the Senate voting in favor.

On [March 20](#), Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell made a wonderful speech on the floor of the Senate:

In my view, Obamacare is a colossal mistake for our country. There's just no way to fix it. It needs to be pulled out by its roots and we need to start over.

This bill needs to be repealed and replaced — not with another unreadable law or another 20,000 pages of regulations — but with common-sense reforms that actually lower health care costs.

And anyone who thinks we've given up that fight is dead wrong.

On [March 15](#), McConnell gave a speech denouncing Obamacare at the Conservative Political Action Conference. He stood next to a stack of papers that were taller than he was, which he said were the 20,000 pages of new regulations that have been issued so far to implement this healthcare monstrosity. Some 828 pages of new regulations were issued in just one day, he said; and he warned that there are many more to come.



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On [March 11](#), in remarks on the Senate floor, McConnell said:

This law is a disaster waiting to happen.

Imagine the burden we're placing on the single mom who wants to open her own store. Or the young entrepreneur who wants to sell some new idea. Or the business owners we all know from back home — the folks who employ so many of our constituents.

Instead of encouraging them to create jobs and grow the economy, we're hitting them with a brick of regulations.

That all sounds pretty good, doesn't it? But McConnell and 19 other Republican [Senators voted](#) to fund Obamacare for the rest of fiscal 2013.

What you've got here is a perfect example of how many Republicans can vote for "business as usual" in Washington, while at the same time making sure they can posture as staunch conservatives for the folks back home.

Here are the 20 Republican Senators who voted in favor of the Cruz amendment, knowing it would fail, but then voted in favor of a measure to make sure the healthcare monstrosity gets all of the taxpayer funds it needs to continue operations for the rest of this fiscal year:

Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, John Barrasso of Wyoming, Roy Blunt of Missouri, John Boozman of Arkansas, Saxby Chambliss of Georgia, Dan Coats of Indiana, Thad Cochran of Mississippi, Susan Collins of Maine, Bob Corker of Tennessee, John Cornyn of Texas, Orrin Hatch of Utah, John Hoeven of North Dakota, Johnny Isakson of Georgia, Mike Johanns of Nevada, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Jeff Sessions of Alabama, Richard Shelby of Alabama, John Thune of South Dakota and Roger Wicker of Mississippi.

By the way, you may be wondering why the vote to fund Obamacare was included in an omnibus piece of legislation called a "continuing resolution." The reason is that our august leaders know that they can get a lot more votes for their massive spending programs if they lump enough things together in one humongous package. So rather than individual votes on various parts of the Federal budget, we get one all-inclusive continuing resolution.

It's so much safer that way. Witness what just happened with efforts to defund Obamacare.

In the predawn hours of March 23, the Democratic majority in the Senate also did something that it has vigorously avoided for the past four years: It passed a budget.

As the kids would say, big whoop. The Democrats' plan calls for almost \$1 trillion in new revenue over the next 10 years. But thanks to 62 percent more spending over the decade, even if they get all that new revenue, the budget still won't balance.

The Republicans, meanwhile, didn't do much better. The Paul Ryan budget, which the House passed and the Senate rejected, also called for more spending, just not quite as much. The Republican budget would have increased Federal spending by 40 percent over the next 10 years. But thanks to increased revenue from our slowly growing economy, the budget was supposed to have balanced by year 10.

Mind you, neither the Democrats nor the Republicans are actually calling for a reduction in government spending. The best we can hope for, they say, is a slight reduction in the proposed growth of government.

Until we more people in the U.S. Senate who will stick to their campaign promises on *every* vote and



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who don't engage in the sort of shell game we just saw with funding for Obamacare, I'm afraid they are probably correct.

Of the 21 Senate seats currently held by Democrats that will be contested next year, Republicans have to win only six of them in addition to retaining the seats they hold in order to regain control of the Senate.

But it sure wouldn't hurt if, at the same time, some of the soft-as-marshmallows Republicans in the list above could also be replaced by some people with a little more backbone.

Until next time, keep some powder dry.

Chip Wood was the first news editor of *The Review of the News* and also wrote for *American Opinion*, our two predecessor publications. He is now the geopolitical editor of *Personal Liberty Digest*, where his *Straight Talk* column appears weekly. This article first appeared in [PersonalLiberty.com](#) and has been reprinted with permission.



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