



Inside Track

ObamaCare Rate Hikes: Bad News for Democrats

On November 1, annual enrollment in the ObamaCare exchanges will open, and it won't be good news for consumers. Insurers are expected to increase their premiums significantly. It could also be bad news for Democrats. Voters will be going to the polls one week later to elect a new president and determine the makeup of one-third of the Senate and the entire House of Representatives.

The exchanges and co-ops, for a variety of reasons, simply cannot attract enough young, healthy people to foot the bill for covering the old and the sick. Exchange coverage is expensive, in part because of ObamaCare's many mandates on insurers, and the law's subsidies are insufficient to offset these costs. Exchange plans are often stingy, with high deductibles and narrow provider networks. The combination of these two factors makes paying the individual-mandate penalty often a much better deal than buying insurance. In addition, the law's mandate that insurers cover young-adult children on their parents' employer-sponsored policies has taken millions of prospective young customers out of the market.

Democrats have real concerns about the next several months. Given that their party bears sole responsibility for ObamaCare, any negative news about the law plays directly into Republicans' hands. Republicans have argued for repealing and replacing ObamaCare, though they have often hedged on just exactly what their replacement would be, perhaps fearing assaults from both the Left (that the plan is insufficiently socialistic) and the Right (that it remains too much so). This gives Democrats an opening to fight back.

And that is a prime reason why the federal government should get out of the healthcare game altogether: Making Americans' health subject to the winds of politics is a surefire recipe for constant instability and conflict. A free market in health insurance and care would enable people to obtain care via cooperation rather than coercion. What's more, unlike ObamaCare, Medicare, Medicaid, and the rest of the federal interventions into healthcare, it would have the advantage of being constitutional.

Only 37 Percent of High-school Seniors Ready for College

The latest edition of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NEAP), also known as the "Nation's Report Card," released on April 27, indicated that only 37 percent of American high-school seniors were academically prepared for college-level math and reading in 2015.

The percentage of students performing at or above proficiency was 25 percent in math and 37 percent in reading. Conversely, the percentage who fell below the basic level of proficiency last year was 38 percent in mathematics and 28 percent in reading.

An April 27 *Wall Street Journal* article about the findings cited Bill Bushaw, the executive director of the National Assessment Governing Board that oversees the test. Bushaw said that although the board was pleased that high-school graduation rates were rising, they were disappointed in the lack of progress in boosting students' skills and knowledge. "These numbers aren't going the way we want," he said. "We just have to redouble our efforts to prepare our students to close opportunity gaps."

The *Journal* article noted that at the time of the assessment, 42 percent of the test-takers said they had been accepted into a four-year college, suggesting that colleges are accepting some entrants who are



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not qualified for college-level work.

The *Journal* also cited Peggy Carr, who is the acting commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, which conducts the test. Carr noted a widening disparity between students performing at the highest and lowest levels: "The students at the top of the distribution are going up and the students at the bottom of the distribution are going down. There is a widening of the gap between higher and lower-ability students.... In math, the decline is real. Students at the lower end are getting worse."

The latest results from the "Nation's Report Card" will undoubtedly produce much hand-wringing and calls to spend more money on government education. A better solution, of course, would be to get K-12 education out of the hands of the federal government and return it to local communities and parents.

Will Obama's Anti-Brexit Remarks in Britain Backfire?

Did President Obama's wading into the Brexit (British exit from the EU) referendum during his stopover in Britain on April 22 aid the pro-EU side, as many commentators claimed, or is it viewed by British voters as an improper intrusion into domestic affairs and bullying by a foreign leader? A new poll suggests the latter, and, ultimately, it may turn out that Obama's intervention has angered many Brits, causing more to favor the "leave" camp rather than the "remain" side that wants to stay in the European Union.

The ICM polling firm found that 46 percent of British voters surveyed want the U.K. to leave, while 44 percent want to stay. "The result suggests that Barack Obama's call for the UK to stay in the EU failed to shift support towards the Remain camp," reported a story for April 28 in the U.K.'s *Express*.

"Interviews for the ICM internet tracker poll were carried out during the US President's visit to Britain last week during which he claimed Britain would lose global influence by leaving the EU and fall to the back of the queue in negotiations for a US trade deal," the *Express* story noted.

President Obama's attack on the Brexit is one of the latest scare tactics in a concerted campaign of fear by the globalist establishment, which views the June 23 referendum as an immense threat to their long-planned New World Order. As we have reported previously, the advocates of one-world government at the IMF, United Nations, G20, Council on Foreign Relations, Trilateral Commission, World Economic Forum, central banks, and other centers of globalist influence have been issuing frantic fulminations claiming all manner of disastrous results for Britain should voters opt in favor of exiting the EU.

However, the ICM poll may indicate that the non-stop anti-Brexit fear campaign is failing. The pro-Brexit side appears to be easily winning the debate on the very heated issue of refugees/migration, and is also making a strong case on economic matters as well, despite the anti-Brexit claims that economic calamity would follow a decision to exit the EU.

House Committee Votes to Require Women to Register for Draft

By a close 32-30 vote, the House Armed Services Committee approved a bill on April 27 that would require women to register for the draft. Amazingly, the bill's sponsor, Representative Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) voted *against* the measure, which he introduced only to prompt a discussion about the Pentagon's decision in December to eliminate restrictions against women serving in combat roles in the



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military.

Hunter probably never thought that a majority of members of the committee would actually vote to approve the bill, H.R. 4478. The California congressman, a former Marine who served three combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, even gave his bill an ominous name that should have discouraged its passage: the “Draft America’s Daughters Act of 2016.” The House Armed Services Committee has 36 Republican members and 27 Democrats, so the measure passed with Republican support.

Hunter introduced his legislation on February 3, and it contained language noting that it would become effective 90 days after the bill’s enactment or “the date on which the Secretary of Defense certifies to Congress that all Combat Arms Military Occupational Specialties are open to qualified female candidates.”

Since there is no history in our nation of sending women into combat, Hunter undoubtedly thought that his bill would do only what he intended — prompt discussion — not be approved by a committee in which Republicans are in the majority.

Hunter’s amendment was part of a defense policy bill that authorizes defense spending for the fiscal year that begins October 1. The committee passed the spending bill by a 60-2 vote the day after approving Hunter’s amendment.

Representative Hunter was evidently overly optimistic about the common sense of most members of the House Armed Services Committee when he introduced his amendment to the defense spending authorization bill as a way to stimulate discussion about the pros and cons of sending women into combat. It can be hoped that better sense will prevail when the measure comes up for a vote before the entire House.



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