



Democrat Plan: Make the IRS the Internal Medical Service

You probably don't associate the Internal Revenue Service with health, unless it's their letterhead's ability to make your heart stop. Yet, under both the House and Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions healthcare reform bills, the dreaded tax department will be a major player in making sure you comply with government healthcare dictates.



And not only do the bills require the providers of health insurance (e.g., employers) to divulge detailed information about whom they insure, they also require individual taxpayers who aren't covered by someone else to provide proof of insurance — under penalty of law.

Cornell Law School professor William A. Jacobson reports on the issue at his blog *Le-gal In-sur-rec-tion*. Explaining the burden placed on employers, he tells us that they will be forced to “file a return with the IRS listing the names, addresses, Social Security numbers, and the coverage period for each person, and ‘such other information as the Secretary [of Health and Human Services] may prescribe.’ ” He then explains the method to this madness, writing:

This information is to be provided to the IRS for good reason. The House bill provides for a tax on people who do not have acceptable coverage at “any time” during the tax year. House bill section 401 provides for a new section 59B (at pp. 167-168) of the Internal Revenue Code:

(a)TAX IMPOSED.—In the case of any individual who does not meet the requirements of subsection (d) at any time during the taxable year, there is hereby imposed a tax equal to 2.5 percent of the excess of—

- (1)the taxpayer's modified adjusted gross income for the taxable year, over
- (2) the amount of gross income specified in section 6012(a)(1) with respect to the taxpayer.

The Senate version is similar, although the tax is called a “shared responsibility payment” not a tax.

Wow, a “tax” isn't as scary — but a “shared responsibility payment”? That's when you know you'll get hosed. House, kid, you were good, real good, but the Senate receives the 2009 George Orwell Award for Outstanding Achievement in Government Euphemizing.

Of course, “shared responsibility” sounds good to many, but the reality is that it won't truly be shared. For one thing, this burden will only fall on those who work on the books and actually *file a tax return*. But what about the 13 to 20+ million illegal aliens in our nation? Remember that they are *included* in the deceptive statistic that there are “47 million uninsured in America today” and would be covered under the socialized medicine scheme being proposed. In other words, government healthcare means



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equal access for all, but a heavy fine only for people (mainly citizens) who actually fund the system. Thus, as with gun control and so many other things, it's more accurate to say that those who *follow the law* will share the burden.

Uncle Sam's message?

Don't follow the law.

To further illustrate the falsehood that is "shared responsibility," we must look at the imploding Massachusetts healthcare plan, after which the federal bills are modeled. Massachusetts also imposes a fine on those who cannot provide proof of health insurance, but it offers an exemption for individuals with deeply held religious beliefs prohibiting recourse to, well, I suppose, some level of modern medical care. Talk about ambiguity.

Now, since there was an Internet rumor indicating that this exemption was regularly offered to Muslims, but not Christians or Jews, I called the Massachusetts Department of Revenue and inquired about what kinds of religious beliefs would pass muster. The representative I spoke to, who was quite supercilious, by the way, wouldn't reveal such information, but she did tell me that you would have to cite the beliefs and prove that you had never visited a hospital. (Thus, I could find no evidence of bias in favor of Muslims. And while such a thing wouldn't surprise me in our politically correct world, at this point it seems that the assertion of such is unfounded.)

Yet the problems with this standard should be obvious. What if I visited a hospital 10 years ago but since experienced a religious conversion? How is a relativistic government — that would say we can't judge the validity of others' beliefs — qualified to judge whether a religious belief is validly held? Can a bureaucrat judge my mind and heart (oh, yeah, that's right. These are the statisticians who gave us "hate-crime" laws)? Next, we always hear about how faith is a "personal matter," so why should I have to cite a wider religious tradition proscribing medical care? I mean, I don't want to sound like Seinfeld's Frank Costanza with his homemade "Festivus" religious celebration, but it seems odd that a society preaching religious-equivalency doctrine would suddenly draw such distinctions. I guess faith is personal when it is contrary to the day's fashions but must be collectivist before it can trump them.

Yet the larger issue here isn't how the IRS exercises its intrusiveness but something most never question: the notion that such intrusiveness should be tolerated in the first place. In other words, we're arguing over how many drawers the man with the magnifying glass should be able to rifle through without ever realizing that he doesn't belong in our house in the first place.

Here is my point: If a stranger walks up to you on the street and asks you how much money you make, what will your answer be? If you're like most people, you'll say, perhaps with a bit of indignation, that it's a personal matter. Yet, strangers working within government ask you not only that but also how you earn your money, what your exemptions are and much, much more every year, and you divulge it without batting an eye. But how does the government have any moral right to have a window into your private financial affairs? Nothing is more un-American, and, more to the point, nothing is more immoral.

We should be looking to eliminate the IRS, not empower it to ensure that, after giving us a coronary with its tax bill, we're deserving of our place in line at the Internal Medical Service.



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