



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on October 21, 2010

## **GOP Senator: “Restructure” ObamaCare Instead of Repealing It**

Republicans are hoping to ride a wave of anti-Democrat, and specifically anti-ObamaCare, sentiment into control of at least one chamber of Congress. Not one Republican voted for ObamaCare, and the GOP has been making a big deal out of its desire to repeal, or at least defund, some or all of the new law.



Yet [questions remain](#): How committed are Republicans to repealing or defunding the monstrosity? When they pledge to replace ObamaCare with their own plan, will that simply be ObamaCare lite? When they rail against ObamaCare’s Medicare cuts, does that mean they will increase Medicare spending, given the opportunity? Is their opposition to nationalized healthcare principled or simply political?

Sen. Judd Gregg of New Hampshire, the top Republican on the Senate Budget Committee, has spoken for himself and, quite likely, many others in the GOP establishment, telling Fox Business Network that “I don’t think starving or repealing [ObamaCare] is the best approach here.” Instead, he explained, “You basically go in and restructure it.”

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In other words, like many a Republican politician before him, Gregg is arguing for reform rather than repeal — the idea being that government programs are not inherently bad but, in fact, can work well if only Republicans are in charge of them. Republican politicians certainly seem to believe this: The GOP Congress passed, and Republican President George W. Bush signed, the largest new entitlement program since the Great Society, Medicare prescription-drug coverage. Meanwhile, despite occasional campaign promises to the contrary, Republicans have never repealed, or even significantly cut, a single major government program. Ronald Reagan once quipped that “a government bureau is the nearest thing to eternal life we’ll ever see on this earth,” and his fellow Republicans apparently want to preserve that glimpse into the hereafter.

Gregg’s comments, [The Hill’s Michael O’Brien notes](#), are a “change of pace even for Gregg.” He had heretofore joined the party chorus in calling for repeal or defunding of the healthcare legislation. Now he suggests that mere “restructuring” of the impossibly complicated contraption is all that’s necessary. What does he really believe? More importantly, what do other GOP legislators and candidates believe? That the House leadership’s stated goal is to replace ObamaCare with other government mandates, many of them derived from ObamaCare, is not encouraging.

The good news is that Gregg is retiring at the end of his term in January. The bad news is that there are



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likely more than a few Republican congressmen and senators who agree with him. Winning Tea Party candidates, other conservative legislators, and constituents need to make sure that the voice of repeal is heard loudly and clearly on Capitol Hill next year. Otherwise, Republican control of Congress may well result in nothing more than the tweaking and rebranding of ObamaCare. How does the “Ronald Reagan Affordable Care Act” strike you?

*Photo: In this Aug. 20, 2009, file photo, Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H., talks about health care during a forum at a senior center in Salem, N.H. Unlike some of his lame-duck colleagues, Gregg isn't disillusioned with Congress: AP Images*



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