



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on November 26, 2014

Now Even Schumer Regrets Passing ObamaCare

It could hardly have been more remarkable if the senior senator from New York had arrived wearing sackcloth and ashes. Charles Schumer (shown), ardent promoter and defender of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, told a gathering at the National Press Club in Washington Tuesday that he now believes Democrats took a wrong turn in passing the ObamaCare law in 2010.



Not that the law itself is bad, Schumer insisted in what has been called, with some exaggeration, his ObamaCare “*mea culpa*” — though he did acknowledge that only “about 5 percent of the electorate” benefit from the huge entitlement program. But while he maintains that the goals of ObamaCare are noble, the enormous task of passing and later defending the national health insurance scheme became a distraction from the “middle-class oriented programs” the party should have pursued after the 2008 elections. Democrats, whom Schumer cheerfully acknowledges are the “pro-government party,” should have realized national healthcare was not “the change we were hired to make. Americans were crying out for the end to the recession, for better wages and more jobs.”

But wait a minute. Wasn’t tackling the recession and creating jobs what the president and congressional Democrats said they were doing right from the start of Obama’s first term? Did they not, along with continuing the “Wall Street bailout” under the Troubled Assets Relief Program, pass an economic stimulus package costing roughly \$800 billion? Now a leading Senate Democrat is saying the reason they have failed to deliver the promised “better wages and more jobs” is that they were distracted by the effort expended on ObamaCare.

“What a knee-slapper!” [wrote John Hayward](#) in *Human Events*, a conservative weekly. “Why, that’s almost as funny as the time Barack Obama said he realized there was no such thing as a ‘shovel-ready job’ after he spent a trillion dollars of our money chasing them.”

Schumer’s public musing over the passage of the healthcare law has come barely two weeks after the surfacing of [a video of ObamaCare architect Jonathan Gruber](#) saying that the details of the plan were deliberately kept from the public so the bill could be passed atop “voter stupidity.” Not surprisingly, some Democrats view Schumer’s comments as an unwelcome post-election recrimination following one of the party’s biggest-ever defeats in this year’s mid-term elections.

“It’s a gut punch for a member of leadership who’s supposed to be our message guy to throw his colleagues under the bus like this purely for self-promotion,” said a senior Senate Democratic aide [quoted at Politico](#). “There’s no question the politics of ACA have been challenging, but millions of people now have health care who didn’t have it before and that’s something Democrats should be proud of and working together to defend — not using as a backboard to score cheap self-promotional points.” Tommy Vietor, a former spokesman for President Obama, summed up Schumer’s remarks this way: “Shorter Chuck Schumer — I wish Obama cared more about helping Democrats than sick people.” Former Obama speechwriter Jon Favreau said he didn’t “remember Chuck Schumer giving that advice when he was privately and publicly championing the Affordable Care Act in 2010.”



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But Schumer's hindsight on the subject is not brand new, Politico pointed out, noting that he offered a similar assessment in an article in the *New Yorker* magazine four years ago — though he has since argued in defense of the law and claimed it would be a political boon to the Democrats eventually. Nor is he alone among Democrats in questioning the wisdom of pushing an overhaul of health insurance through the Congress on a party-line vote when they did. Even Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren, the generally acknowledged leader of the party's "progressives," sort of seconded Schumer's second-guessing.

"Sen. Warren agrees with Sen. Schumer that there was an urgent need in 2009 and 2010 to help middle-class families who were struggling to get by and that more should have been done," a spokeswoman told Politico.

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island wrote in an email:

I agree with Chuck that the ACA was essential as our health care system was unjust and spinning out of control. I also agree that if we could have done more infrastructure first it would have connected more with working Americans, and our sales job was less than stellar.

Really? Democrats should have done a better "sales job" at selling those "shovel-ready jobs" that [their leader acknowledged](#) — again somewhat belatedly — could be neither found nor created by the hundreds of billions spent in pursuit of them? Whitehouse's "sales job" sounds more like a shovel-ready snow job.

"Mr. Schumer is a leading Democratic ideologist, so perhaps he's even front-running the Hillary campaign," the *Wall Street Journal* [commented editorially](#). "Republicans should test the limits of his new health-care reform realism in the next two years."

Photo of Sen. Charles Schumer: AP Images



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