



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on March 22, 2013

Rep. Bachmann Says ObamaCare “Literally Kills”

The debate over ObamaCare “death panels” is back in the news, thanks to U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.), who raised the issue on the floor of the House Thursday.

“That’s why we’re here,” Bachmann [said](#). “Because we’re saying let’s repeal this failure before it literally kills women, kills children, kills senior citizens. Let’s not do that. Let’s love people. Let’s care about people. Let’s repeal it now while we can.”



The *Washington Post* noted that Bachmann, like Sarah Palin a favorite with Tea Party conservatives, is “no stranger to hyperbole,” adding that her address last week at the Conservative Political Action Conference “earned her a pair of Four Pinocchio verdicts from Post fact-checker Glenn Kessler.” That speech focused on presidential perks and benefits that, she claimed, had put annual compensation for the president’s work somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1.4 billion.

Bachmann was referring to a new book, *Presidential Perks Gone Royal* by Republican lobbyist Robert Keith Gray, who said the book was an exposé on the royal trappings of the modern presidency, rather than an attack on the incumbent, though the subtitle is, *Your Taxes Are Being Used For Obama’s Reelection*. Bachmann cited some examples of the imperial prerogatives of the president, including the claim that taxpayers pay someone to walk the president’s dog, a charge *Tonight Show* host Jay Leno treated lightly by claiming Vice President Biden performs that chore for free.

“Now we find out that there are five chefs on Air Force One,” Bachmann [told](#) the gathering of conservative activists at a Maryland suburb of Washington, D.C. last week. “There are two projectionists who operate the White House movie theater. They regularly sleep at the White House in order to be readily available in case the first family wants a really, really late show. And I don’t mean to be petty here, but can’t they just push the play button?”

“We are also the ones who are paying for someone to walk the president’s dog,” said Bachmann, a candidate for the GOP presidential nomination in 2012. “Now, why are we doing that when we can’t even get a disabled veteran into the White House for a White House tour? That isn’t caring!”

Ironically, provisions of the ObamaCare law intended to reduce waste and extravagance have ignited and reignited the controversy over what Palin and others have called “death panels.” Recognizing that most of the cost of medical care occurs in the last few years of a patient’s life, the original version of the Affordable Care Act had a provision for hiring counselors to discuss with patients the desirability of living wills that would allow patients, by their own decisions, to die without expensive life-prolonging extraordinary measures. That feature stirred up so much controversy that it was eventually dropped from the bill before it became law.

The law does retain, however, provisions for Independent Payment Advisory Boards to rule on what levels of care are appropriate for particular patients. The fear is that with the potential for a nearly universal healthcare law to trigger an explosion of costs, containment measures will be implemented that would deny payments for care of the terminally ill, especially the elderly. That caused President



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Obama, when campaigning for passage of the bill in 2009, to promise, “We’re not going to pull the plug on Grandma.”

Yet simple arithmetic would suggest that if ObamaCare is to live up to its billing as a means of containing and even reducing the cost of healthcare to taxpayers and hospitals, the savings will have to be effected by cutting care and services somewhere. What opponents fear is that government officials or quasi-independent “bureaucrats” will make the judgments on providing or denying compensation for healthcare based on patients’ ability to be “productive members of society,” or to live “meaningful lives.”

Should healthcare be denied on that basis to the elderly and the disabled, the current battle over ObamaCare’s penalty on individuals who do not purchase health insurance and the controversy over the contraceptive mandate for healthcare coverage may look like a Sunday School picnic compared to the fight over bureaucrats’ decisions to, in Obama’s words, “pull the plug on Grandma.”

Photo of U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann: AP Images



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