



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on September 17, 2012

Taxpayers to Fund Hollywood ObamaCare Propaganda

Taxpayers are funding a “public relations” marketing contract to promote ObamaCare worth almost \$1 million so far that will include working with Hollywood to promote the controversial federal healthcare takeover in popular TV shows. Critics blasted the deal as an effort to use propaganda to drum up support for Obama’s deeply unpopular signature statute, which polls show [a majority of Americans hope to repeal](#).



According to the *New York Times*, which [first reported on the scheme](#), California officials overseeing the implementation of the ObamaCare-mandated “healthcare exchange” know that much of the battle will involve public opinion. So as other state governments work to [nullify the federal power grab](#), authorities in the Golden State are pouring federal and state tax dollars into an expensive “marketing plan.”

Already famous for slavish support of big government and President Obama, Hollywood and the entertainment industry will apparently be one of the main targets of the pro-ObamaCare propaganda scheme. According to the marketing plan cited by the *Times*, among the ideas being discussed is a so-called “reality TV show” surrounding “the trials and tribulations of families living without medical coverage.”

On top of that, the taxpayer-funded “marketing” scheme will aim to have prime-time television shows such as *Modern Family* and *Grey’s Anatomy* promoting ObamaCare in their plots. Spanish-language “telenovelas” run by Univision will also be targeted in the public relations effort, the *Times* reported.

“I’d like to see 10 of the major TV shows, or telenovelas, have people talking about ‘that health insurance thing,’” California health exchange Executive Director Peter V. Lee was [quoted](#) as saying. “There are good story lines here.”

The initial \$900,000 contract for “public relations” services — analysts largely consider the term a synonym for propaganda — was awarded to Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide. The company, which has a long history of working with government, touts a new “global behavior change practice” on its [website](#) — a tool that apparently prods people into doing what clients want.

Other elements of the scheme include massive advertising campaigns in dozens of languages. Some of the examples cited by the *Times*: advertising on coffee cup sleeves at community colleges and buying ads at professional soccer matches to reach young Hispanic men.

In addition to the taxpayer-financed propaganda blitz — the exchange is funded with “grants” from the U.S. government and by already-strapped state taxpayers — a health insurance industry-linked foundation known as the California Endowment has already spent around \$15 million touting ObamaCare. The tax-funded ads will not start until next year.

Critics of the propaganda scheme, however, are up in arms. “Remember that the liberal media was furious that the federal government would promote the war in Iraq inside Iraq, and furious that the



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Department of Education would hire PR flacks like Armstrong Williams to talk up Bush education programs on cable news," [noted](#) Tim Graham, the director of media analysis at the Media Research Center. "So where is their outrage at the idea that federal grants would promote ObamaCare advertising inside network TV entertainment programs?"

Recent polls [show](#) that a majority of Americans still want ObamaCare repealed even as multiple states work to nullify the scheme entirely. Even in California, barely 54 percent of the population supports the healthcare takeover. And the GOP could still end the scheme altogether, either by cutting off funding in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives or repealing at least parts the law if Mitt Romney were elected.

Aside from complaints about using taxpayer money to support government policies, popular or not, opponents argue that the bloated California state government as well as the U.S. government are already drowning in debt and seeking tax hikes — hardly a good time to squander resources on political propaganda. In fact, California's state government finances are in such poor shape that the future of ObamaCare is in question even in the Golden State.

The California health exchange website has already cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars — far more than the price tag to build Google. Most of that was funded by a \$237-million "grant" extracted from American taxpayers, printed by the Federal Reserve, or borrowed by Washington. The rest came directly from Californian taxpayers.

But as the state government teeters on the edge of financial oblivion — the deficit is estimated at \$16 billion — Democrat Governor Gov. Jerry Brown is begging citizens to approve a "temporary" tax increase. California Secretary of Health and Human Services Diana Dooley raised the stakes, [indicating](#) that even the implementation of ObamaCare may be at risk if state voters refuse to surrender more money.

That will not stop the taxpayer-funded ObamaCare propaganda, however. Analysts widely expect Hollywood to go along with the scheme, promoting the unpopular healthcare takeover on popular TV shows to unsuspecting Americans seeking "entertainment" — blissfully unaware of the government-sponsored political scheming.

"There are times it seems overwhelming how corrupted various aspects of society have become in the effort to impose Obamacare on the country," [observed](#) William Jacobson, associate clinical professor at Cornell Law School. "Instead of helping sell soap, television will help sell a political platform. Is there any doubt that Hollywood will play along?"

Even with multiple TV shows spewing propaganda for ObamaCare, however, some commentators believe opposition will remain strong. Many conservatives barely watch television now due to the overt political bias and the widespread immorality passed off as normality — and those who do watch are largely aware of Hollywood's overt big government bias.

"If the Left really wants to convince people Obamacare is a great thing, their first step should be to stop giving Congress, unions and other leftist organizations an exemption from the law," [wrote](#) political commentator Charles Phipps. "If the law isn't good enough for them, no television show would ever convince me it's good enough for me. If I watched it. Which I won't."

Another ObamaCare critic, Justin Higgins, echoed those sentiments. "They're talking about taxpayer funded propaganda, plain and simple," he [said](#) in a recent blog post about the scheme. "This is an obscene waste of taxpayer dollars with a clear political purpose, yet there's apparently nothing we can



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do, except expose it, defeat Obama and repeal the damn thing.”

Of course, this is hardly the first time the Obama administration and American officials have come under fire for spending taxpayer money on political propaganda. Earlier this year, for example, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [was criticized for unconstitutionally spending \\$20 million on “PR” to promote ObamaCare](#).

In fact, despite federal law prohibiting government propaganda aimed at Americans, the use of taxpayer money to tout political schemes has been steadily rising in recent years. Just this month, lawmakers in Congress were [investigating a scandal surrounding the use of “stimulus” funds](#) to purchase over 100 ads touting “green energy” schemes on the far-left MSNBC cable television outlet. That \$2-million plot was also hatched under the guise of “public relations.”

“We understand this contract used taxpayer dollars to purchase advertisements on MSNBC during ‘Countdown with Keith Olbermann’ and ‘The Rachel Maddow Show,’” wrote House Committee on Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman Rep. John Kline (R-Minn.) and other Republicans in a letter to Labor Department Secretary Hilda Solis. The secretary was asked to promptly explain the controversial decision.

“Despite the fact that these funds were made available as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act — legislation President Obama said was critical for immediate job creation — an examination of public records show that the contract that resulted in the advertisements on MSNBC created no jobs,” the lawmakers concluded, requesting information about which law purportedly authorized spending taxpayer funds on public relations gimmicks by “Job Corps.”

Before the MSNBC scandal, *The New American* [reported](#) that many of the biggest establishment media companies — the *Washington Post*, NBC, Reuters, newspaper giant Gannett, CBS, among others — were receiving billions of tax dollars from an ObamaCare slush fund as they peddled the healthcare takeover to the American people. No disclosures were offered in their reports explaining that the company was receiving ObamaCare money.

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