




Healthcare Legislation Process as Distasteful as Sausage Making

Back in the good old days, once upon a time,  moving a bill into law was clear, transparent, and usually based upon the Constitution. Nearly 2½ million viewers have seen the YouTube video “Schoolhouse Rock” over the past three years, most of them recalling days when things were simpler and more honest.

As Kimberly Strassel said in the *Wall Street Journal*, “It’s clearly time for a remake.” Except that YouTube wouldn’t allow it because it would have to be X-rated.

The title of Strassel’s article, “[Inside the Pelosi Sausage Factory](#),” alludes to the old maxim that those with weak stomachs should not watch sausage or legislation being made.

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As articles [here](#) and [here](#) have shown, the process is now so fetid and malodorous that polls rating voters’ opinion of Congress are at the [lowest levels](#) ever recorded.

The “Slaughter Solution” was merely one manifestation of the sorry process of getting Obamacare passed. It would have allowed the bill to “pass” without having members actually vote for it. Speaker of the House Pelosi admitted that “It’s more insider and process oriented than most people want to know, but I like it, because people don’t have to vote on the Senate bill.”

While that kettle of malignancy was brewing, President Obama flew to Pennsylvania to “talk with” five House Democrats who were wavering in their support for the bill, and then on to Missouri where three more fence-sitters waited for him, and finally on to Virginia to “support” four more Democrats who were on the “questionable” list. According to Strassel, the President’s “goal was to let undecideds know that [he] had them in his crosshairs, that he still had pull with [their] base, and he’d use it against them.” Following his visits, half of the fence sitters went from “no” to “yes”.

Some Democrats needed a little more than just talk and threats, however. California Representative Jim Costa stated publicly that he’d “demanded [that] the administration increase water to his Central Valley district [in exchange for his vote].” On Tuesday, the administration raised the water supplies for that district from 5% allocation to 25%. Mr. Costa, however, now denies that there was ever such a “quid pro quo”, as he voted to support the bill. Florida Representative Suzanne Kosmas indicated that NASA, which is in her district, needed some more funding, in exchange for her “yes” vote. As Strassel said: “Watch the NASA budget.” Democrat Bart Gordon, who is retiring this year, sold out for an additional \$100 million in extra Medicare funding for his state of Tennessee.

Other threats were made to bring recalcitrants into line. Blue Dog Representative Allen Boyd (D-Fla.) is faced with a liberal challenger in his primary race with the key weapon of his opponent Boyd’s reluctance to support the bill. The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) was pressured to pull its financial support for New York Representative Michael McMahon. And Rep. Stephanie Sandlin (D-S.D.) was threatened by Obama campaign manager Steve Hildebrand to challenge for her seat if she



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on March 23, 2010

didn't go along.

The list goes on. Scott Murphy (D-N.Y.) suddenly found himself the target of a \$1.3 million ad campaign urging him to change his vote. MoveOn.org added to the financial pressure and also threatened a primary challenge if he voted "no."

This still wasn't enough for Pelosi, and so the Democrats changed the numbers for the Congressional Budget Office's "score" of Obamacare so that some other resisters were persuaded to change their votes. And yet, despite these pressures and badgering, Pelosi was still short. It was time to up the ante, and go after the "pro-life" opponents to the bill. Bart Stupak (D-Mich.) and others were persuaded that a meaningless executive order would eliminate public funding of abortion, and they changed their votes to "yes," putting Pelosi over the top.

As Rasmussen Reports [put it](#), "You've really got to hand it to President Obama and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Saddled with a majority of both houses and a hold on the White House, they somehow managed to pass the Senate health care bill in the House. It's a miracle!"

It's no miracle. It's just how business is done in the sordid, sleazy swampland of Washington, D.C.



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