

Why Aren't Progressives Disrupting ObamaCare Town Halls?

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Many progressives are getting all bent out of shape over the “brown shirt” rabble organized by health industry PR firms to disrupt the so-called “town meetings” being organized all over the country by Democratic members of Congress.

What they are conveniently forgetting is that these are not really “town meetings” at all, at least in the sense of the town meetings I grew up with, and started out covering as a young journalist in Connecticut—that is, meetings called and run democratically, with leaders elected from the floor, open to all residents of a community.

These “town meetings” are really nothing but propaganda sessions run by members of Congress who are trying to burnish their fraudulent credentials as public servants, and trying to perpetrate a huge fraud of a health care bill that purports to be a progressive “reform” of the US health care system, but that actually further entrenches the control of that system by the insurance industry, and to a lesser extent, the hospital and drug industry.

ObamaCare is to health reform what bank bailouts are to financial system reform, which is to say it is the opposite of what its name implies.

The right-wing nuts who cry that ObamaCare is introducing euthanasia for the elderly and infirm, or that it is socialism, are ignorant wackos, to be sure, but they are right about one thing: Americans are about to be royally screwed on health care reform by the president and the Democratic Congress, just as they’ve been screwed by them on financial system “reform.”

The appropriate response to this screw-job is the one the right has adopted: shut these sham “town meetings” down, and run the sell-out politicians out of town on a rail, preferably coated in tar and feathers the way the snake-oil salesmen of old used to be handled!

This is not about civil discourse. This is about propaganda. The Obama administration and the Democratic Congressional leadership have sold out health care reform for the tainted coin of the medical-industrial industry, and are holding, or trying to hold, these meetings around the country to promote legislation that has essentially been written for them by that industry—legislation that will force everyone to pay for insurance as offered, and priced, by the private insurance industry. What a deal for those companies—a captive market of 300 million people! There will be little or no effort to control prices, and the higher costs will be financed through higher taxes, and through cuts in Medicare benefits.

This isn't "reform." It's corruption, pure and simple.

Any mention of a system that works—single payer—the system we already have in the form of Medicare for the elderly and disabled, and the system that has proved successful for almost four decades in Canada— has been systematically blocked and censored out of the discussion. Every effort has been made to bury an excellent bill, HR 676, offered up by Rep. John Conyers (D-MI), which would cover every American by simply expanding Medicare to cover everyone.

The only proper response at this point is obstruction, and the more militant and boisterous that obstruction, the better.

Instead of opposing the right-wing hecklers at these events, progressives should be making common cause with them. Instead of calling them fascists, we should be working to turn them, by showing them that the enemy is not the left; it is the corporations that own both Democrats and Republicans alike.

The only proper approach to the wretched health care legislation currently working its way through Congress at this point is to kill it and start over. At these "town meeting" staged events, Obama and the Democrats need to hear, in no uncertain terms, that we don't want no stinkin' ObamaCare. We want Medicare for all.

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