

Healthcare and cynicism

Written by Joseph Phillips
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The current philosophy of governance – and this includes governance of the democrat and republican variety—is that there is tremendous capacity in government to better the lives of average folks; it is the power of administrative policy that can end poverty, cure disease, and ultimately save the planet. It is, alas, also the promise of happiness written in capital letters that entices “we the people” to grant government ever greater powers with which to work their magic. Can’t find any authority in the constitution for the actions of our government? “Why man, they are engaged in the serious business of saving humanity!”

Woe to those that forget that the church is in the business of virtue; government is in the business of power. To mistake one for the other is to, in the one case risk the loss of your soul, in the other the loss of your liberty.

It all sounds a bit hysterical, I know, but I believe in math and two and two still makes four. Consider the words of John Conyers (D-Mich). During a speech at a luncheon for the national press club Conyers questioned the point of lawmakers reading the Healthcare bill. There is no point in reading a bill that is 1000 pages long, said Conyers if you don’t “have two days and two lawyers to find out what it means after you read the bill?”

Conyers is correct. And I am just cynical enough to believe that the length and legalese is purposeful. The door to interpretation and regulatory enforcement by bureaucrats must be left ajar. What we learn from Conyers is that the big picture is what is important.

And the big picture is always about control and power; it is also at the heart of the current discussion of Healthcare reform. Another example of the purposeful inexactness of language. Why do we not talk about reforming medical care?

Health is the relative condition of the human body and is determined by a variety of factors one of which is medical care. Other factors that influence our health are diet, amount of exercise, heredity; there is even a growing body of evidence demonstrating that prayer, meditation and regular attendance at worship services extends life expectancy, improves the immune system and adds to the overall health of the individual.

It is not hysterical to begin to wonder if the tentacles of a government run “healthcare” system will not find their way into the food services industry, leisure activities and even our spiritual endeavors.

Consider that just last week the Los Angeles Times reported on a new study by the Urban Institute entitled: “Reducing Obesity: Policy Strategies from the Tobacco Wars.” In order to fight the obesity “epidemic” in America the study recommends an excise tax on fattening foods. As sure as night follows day this is the first step down the road to “good food” and “bad food” as defined by bureaucrats in Washington D.C. It is a step the administrative state requires.

The allure of universal healthcare to most Americans is that it sounds an awful lot like “free” health care. Protest if you like, but that is really what most Americans want. We want to be able to go to any doctor we choose, for whatever ailment we have, receive the most current and cutting edge treatment available and not have to come out of pocket. Nice work if you can get

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it.

The crisis in American “health care” is and will continue to be who pays for medical services and how much they pay. Because it is at bottom a financial issue, the question of policy will be driven by similar concerns. In order to control costs those in charge will make financial decisions- not medical decisions- and policy makers will be encouraged to use their ever expanding power over our lives to address the crisis.

See if this sounds familiar: one way in which we can control the rising cost of healthcare is to try and make sure people are healthier and so need less medical care. Obese Americans account for more than \$40 billion in annual “healthcare” spending. We need to prevent Americans from eating too much sugar, fat, red meat etc. etc. etc.

Have no fear, Government will ride to the rescue with a myriad of laws, taxes and expanded regulatory powers all designed to protect us; make us happier and healthier. The fine print will have been ignored because the details simply don’t matter -- at least not when you are engaged in the noble work of saving humanity from itself.

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