

The Albatross Award

Lawrence R. Huntoon, M.D., Ph.D.

*Ah! well a-day! what evil looks,
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.*

—*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1798)

On Nov. 4 the electorate spoke and awarded the Albatross Award to President Barack Hussein Obama and his socialist colleagues in Congress who voted for “ObamaCare.” The midterm election was not just a referendum on the Affordable Care Act (ACA), but a referendum on the President’s other harmful and failed policies, and the bureaucratic incompetence that is the hallmark of his administration.

Barack Hussein Obama figuratively shot American medicine, the envy of the free world, with his crossbow, and he now owns the curse that is his to wear.

Members of his own party did their best to distance themselves from their dear leader before midterm elections, but they were unable to escape accountability to voters for what they had done.

Although socialists no doubt had hoped that the multitude of lies put forth by President Obama would simply be overlooked, dismissed, or forgotten by the voting public, voters provided an educational shellacking to the contrary. There is no virtue in deliberately lying to the American public, telling them they could keep their insurance plan and keep the doctors of their choice if they wanted to, and that health insurance premiums would be more affordable for everyone under the politically named Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Socialists were also counting on the gullibility of voters, hoping that by delaying particularly painful and unpopular provisions of the ACA until after midterm elections, voters would not hold them accountable for harm that was merely delayed. The socialist tactic of calling evil good and good evil, calling lies truth and truth lies, and calling good harm and harm good, did not resonate with the voters. The President’s violation of the U.S. Constitution by re-writing a law was also not well received by the electorate. The ends do not justify the means. Congress writes and passes laws, not the President.

The appointment of the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) by the President was also delayed until after the midterm election. The IPAB is the mechanism for rationing care using the fee schedule. As with the delayed employer mandate, the electorate likely recognized that rationing of their medical care was merely delayed and is still scheduled to occur at some point under the one-party law.

“ObamaCare” has already done great harm to millions of people. Millions have lost the health insurance they liked and wanted to keep, and have been forced to purchase inferior

policies with provisions they may not want or need, at a much higher price. Many have lost their physician of choice due to forced changes in insurance coverage.

In addition, the law has allowed insurance companies to manipulate coverage, with much higher co-pays and deductibles, and unlimited out-of-pocket costs for catastrophic care, in such a way that coverage has become merely an illusion. Exorbitant premiums paid to insurance companies under ObamaCare represent a socialist wealth transfer scheme, the biggest wealth transfer scheme in our country’s history.

ObamaCare has also made every attempt to exterminate independent physicians’ practice of fee-for-service medicine by coercing them to join collective Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs). This has severely damaged the sacrosanct patient-physician relationship, as ACO physicians are held accountable to the organization’s bottom line and goals, which are often in conflict with the individualized care patients want and need.

For those independent physicians who have opted out of government programs like Medicare, ObamaCare seeks to keep them from being able to practice medicine unless they accept a special number from the government. In order to conduct the business of medicine for patients 65 and older, all physicians are required to accept the government’s NPI number and to have their name written in the Physician Enrollment Chain and Ownership (PECOS) database. The words “chain” and “ownership” in the name of the government database make it very clear who is in charge.

Some have even noted an eerie resemblance to a warning issued more than 2,000 years ago:

It [the beast] forced all the people, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to be given a stamped image on their right hands or their foreheads, so that no one could buy or sell except one who had the stamped image of the beast’s name or the number that stood for its name. [Revelations 13:16-17]

The socialists still hope to succeed through their tactic of putting a socialist scheme like ObamaCare in place, maintaining it for a number of years, and making some totally dependent on the government. When government takes wealth from some and gives it to others to whom it does not belong, the repeal of the legislation that redistributed loot from legalized government theft reliably results in protests of unfairness by those who benefited from the socialist scheme.

The Germans, in fact, even have a name for this situation. They call it the Kleinmachnow Syndrome.¹ In formerly Communist-ruled East Germany, the Communists confiscated all private property. Some, opting for freedom, fled the tyranny of the Communists and simply left their homes behind in the so-called German Democratic Republic or GDR. The Communists assigned the abandoned homes to comrades who remained. The Ossies, as the former East Germans are called, who did not

pay for their homes lived in them for years until reunification of Germany.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the start of reunification, those who were forced to abandon the homes they had paid for and rightly owned were able to reclaim them. As a result, 8,000 of the 11,000 residents of the little town of Kleinmachnow were forced to leave the homes they did not pay for but lived in for many years. Ossia protests of unfairness and inequality were heard far and wide. They complained of the loss of homes that were stolen from others by the Communists, and they complained that they have less wealth, fewer assets, and less ability to invest, and are poorer than their former West German counterparts. That, however, is the predictable result of all Communist and socialist systems.

For the newly elected Republicans, who have received a mandate from their constituents to reverse the toxic socialism that the Obama Administration injected into our country, dismantling of ObamaCare needs to begin on Jan 1, 2015. They must not compromise core principles of limited government in the hope of attracting more liberal constituents to vote for them in the future.

Bills designed to dismantle individual components of ObamaCare should be passed without delay. Legislative initiatives should begin with the most unpopular components of the law, forcing congressional socialists to make good on their claimed desire to fix things the public doesn't want, or to reveal their true colors as hardline socialists bent on controlling one-sixth of the nation's economy and imposing total government control of medicine.

Each time the President vetoes such bills, the weight of his Albatross will increase, enhancing the chances of electing a non-socialist President in the next election. The weight of his Albatross will also increase as he implements all of the most negative provisions of ObamaCare that he strategically delayed beyond the midterm elections, hoping that the electorate would be too stupid to figure it out.

AAPS will also continue the fight to dismantle ObamaCare. The sacrosanct patient-doctor relationship and freedom in medicine are at stake. Our lawsuit against ACA is now on petition for certiorari before the U.S. Supreme Court. The lawsuit *King v. Burwell*, another lawsuit against ObamaCare in which AAPS filed an amicus brief, was recently granted certiorari by the Supreme Court. And, the lawsuit against ACA filed by AAPS member Dr. Steven Hotze, in which AAPS also filed an amicus brief, is set for oral argument in December in the Fifth Circuit, which includes Texas.

We deeply appreciate the support many of our AAPS members have provided through tax-deductible contributions to the American Health Legal Foundation. We will continue to keep our members updated as the battle continues.

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REFERENCES

1. Schofield M. Divisions remain in Germany 25 years after Berlin Wall fell. *Buffalo News* (McClatchy Newspapers), Nov 8, 2014. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/mzqqbpbq>. Accessed Nov 15, 2014.

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