

## Republican Perspective

21 January 2015

by Ed Manning

### Single-Payer Reality Check

*“All people are born alike - except Republicans and Democrats” Groucho Marx*

Obamacare is only the preview to the Left’s coming attraction, single-payer health care. Progressives have long sought to expand big government control over your personal health. Their assertion that “health care is a human right” is a key piece of utopian life. The recent attempt in deep blue Vermont is worth your attention.

Democratic Governor Pete Shumlin was elected in the recent mid-term elections. His campaign promised the implementation of single-payer health system in the Green Mountain State. So it was somewhat surprising that one month after his election he canceled the dream.

This is Governor Shumlin’s third term so it is reasonable to assume that he had some idea of the cost of single-payer. He had expert health economists develop the feasibility of the system and they promised that it would save the state \$1.6 billion over ten years. One of these economists was Dr. Jonathan Gruber, MIT and an architect of Obamacare. The good professor is the one that told us that American taxpayers were stupid for not recognizing the pitfalls of Obamacare.

The progressive Left just doesn’t get the basic premise that the entity that has the best control of your money is you and not government. The market way to bring down prices is for consumers to have more control of their health care dollars. You as an individual are going to shop around for the best price and quality. If government is paying for care, you’re less inclined to care about costs.

Advocates of single-payer believe that health care is best when it is free to the patient at the point of care. They fail to mention that free means higher taxes and that government decides whether or not you get that hip replacement. Republicans call this rationing.

Gov. Shumlin in his cancellation announcement said “the potential economic disruption and risks would be too great to small businesses, working families, and the state’s economy.” His administration said that in 2017 Vermont taxpayers would be faced with a 151% tax increase to pay for single-payer and by 2019 a 160% increase. So much for free!

Vermont’s attempt would have required hospitals and doctors to accept Medicare-like reimbursement for their privately insured patients. This would have resulted in serious cuts and it is easy to understand the pushback from the medical community. Price controls are always problematic and especially on the health system. The Governor’s

special counsel for health-care reform, Anya Rader-Wallack, when queried about how Green Mountain Care will be paid for, replied “We can move full speed ahead with what we need without knowing where the money’s coming from.” Rader-Wallack holds a PhD in social policy. Really?

During the run-up to Obamacare, Democrats pointed to Mitch Romney’s Massachusetts as the statist health care model. When Democratic progressives make their move towards single-payer, it will be interesting to see if Vermont is mentioned.