

Roots in Ripon

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Chuck Roots

17 July 2017

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Get Down to Business

The news is full of reports about how the Health Care Bill, a.k.a., the Affordable Care Act (ACA), a.k.a., Obamacare needs to be scrapped, rescinded, done away with, repealed or any other term describing elimination you wish to choose.

Republican Congressmen have been caterwauling about the disaster Obamacare would visit on the American people. And they were right. It is and has been a disaster. I even read the original draft (all 1100 pages) of the ACA back in 2009. It was brought before the House of Representatives October 29, and was known then as the Affordable Health Care for America Act (HR 3962 – House Resolution). President Obama and the Democrats had just assumed control of the presidency and the Congress after eight years of President George W. Bush and the Republicans. Within the first year in office, the Democrats crafted and enacted a health care bill. On December 24, the Senate passed an alternative health care bill known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. In early 2010, the House abandoned its reform bill in favor of amending the Senate bill, known as the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010. Opponents of this bill began referring to it as “Obamacare,” fully intending that the term would be used as a pejorative.

My point is this: The Democrats managed to bring a health care bill up for vote in Congress, and succeeded! And all this occurred within the first year of Obama’s presidency. Republicans have vowed since 2010 to repeal Obamacare, and present to Congress a much better bill to be implemented once Obamacare is no more.

I say, Hooray for the Republicans! So, where’s this bill you’ve had eight years to work on? Excuse me if I’m a bit flummoxed by the excuses coming from the leaders of the House and Senate (Ryan and McConnell) as to why the bill is not ready. And you’re telling me and the American people that you can’t rally enough Republican support as a party on the hill to pass what is currently being proposed?

May I remind the Republican gentlemen and gentleladies of Congress that we the people of these United States voted you folks into office to do the work you’re supposed to do on our behalf so we who vote and pay taxes shouldn’t have to be troubled with such matters as health care. You all promised to bring a new health care bill up for vote once you gained the House in 2010. You reaffirmed that promise once you gained the Senate in 2014. Now, in 2016, you have an

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admittedly unconventional president, who, nevertheless, is a Republican. So, what's the problem here? Whining, hand-wringing, and the making of excuses will not be tolerated. We voted you in to do the hard work. Now, get to work!

This all brings me to my final point: There is a dearth of leadership within our government. The Republicans are embarrassing themselves through Congressional ineptitude, functioning as though they are the minority party. The leadership within the Democrat party is no better. The difference is, the Democrats always act as though they are in charge, especially when they are the minority party, as they are right now. In fact, I would point out that it has sunk to a new low. There's not a one of these leaders from either party that is demonstrating true leadership at a time when it is desperately needed. Statesmanship is completely absent within the Halls of Congress. You may wish to respond with a comment such as, "But Chuck, not all the members of Congress are poor leaders!" And I would, on the surface, agree with you. But those who are attempting to lead well are being silenced by those who are in the Washington DC "Beltway Club." Some of these congressmen have spent decades inside DC. It's the, "Good ole boy club." They have learned to play the game. They scratch each other's back to the degree that if you don't play the game the way they have it set up, you simply will be ignored. You may be pure in your desires to bring change, but if you don't go along, you'll be a one-term Congressman. And the electorate, the voting public, is left wondering where their champions have gone.

All leaders, particularly government elected officials, should memorize Solomon's prayer to God from I Kings 3. Beginning in verse 7, it says, "*Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. ⁸Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. ⁹So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?*"

¹⁰The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. ¹¹So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, ¹²I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart."

Lord, please give us such leaders today! Leaders who will put the governance of the people first, not seeking vainglory for themselves. And dare we lift our heads to ask you once again, please, God, bless America?