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DIGEST

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THE FOUNDATION

“The legislative department is everywhere extending the sphere of its activity and drawing all power into its impetuous vortex.” --James Madison, Federalist No. 48

EDITORIAL EXEGESIS

“We’re not sure American schools teach civics any more, but once upon a time they taught that under the U.S. Constitution a bill had to pass both the House and Senate to become law. Until this week, that is, when Speaker Nancy Pelosi is moving to merely ‘deem’ that the House has passed the Senate health-care bill and then send it to President Obama to sign anyway. Under the ‘reconciliation’ process that began [Monday] afternoon, the House is supposed to approve the Senate’s Christmas Eve bill and then use ‘sidecar’ amendments to fix the things it doesn’t like. Those amendments would then go to the Senate under rules that would let Democrats pass them while avoiding the ordinary 60-vote threshold for passing major legislation. This alone is an abuse of traditional Senate process. But Mrs. Pelosi & Co. fear they lack the votes in the House to pass an identical Senate bill, even with the promise of these reconciliation fixes. House Members hate the thought of going on record voting for the Cornhusker kickback and other special-interest bribes that were added to get this mess through the Senate, as well as the new tax on high-cost insurance plans that Big Labor hates. So at the Speaker’s command, New York Democrat Louise Slaughter, who chairs the House Rules Committee, may insert what’s known as a ‘self-executing rule,’ also known as a ‘hereby rule.’ Under this amazing procedural ruse, the House would then vote only once on the reconciliation corrections, but not on the underlying Senate bill. If those reconciliation corrections pass, the self-executing rule would say that the Senate bill is presumptively approved by the House -- even without a formal up-or-down vote on the actual words of the Senate bill. Democrats would thus send the Senate bill to President Obama for his signature even as they claimed to oppose the same Senate bill. They would be declaring themselves to be for and against the Senate bill in the same vote. Even John Kerry never went that far with his Iraq war machinations. ... This two-votes-in-one gambit is a brazen affront to the plain language of the Constitution, which is intended to require democratic accountabil-

ity. Article 1, Section 7 of the Constitution says that in order for a ‘Bill’ to ‘become a Law,’ it ‘shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate.’ This is why the House and Senate typically have a conference committee to work out differences in what each body passes. ... If Congress can now decide that the House can vote for one bill and the Senate can vote for another, and the final result can be some arbitrary hybrid, then we have abandoned one of [James] Madison’s core checks and balances.” --The Wall Street Journal

UPRIGHT

“It speaks to the sturdiness of the system our founders installed that it is, as intended, so resistant to passing major legal and cultural changes against the overwhelming will of the public. So resistant that, in frustration, the Democratic speaker of the House has been driven to consider breaking her oath of office and violate the Constitution in order to get her way.” --columnist Tony Blankley

“The debate over health care reform has been messy and often chaotic, but here we are a year later and Barack Obama and his radical agenda might yet win. If it does, he will have put in place the structure for taking over everything else.” --Washington Times editor emeritus Wesley Pruden

“Though the two issues may seem utterly unrelated, they do have this in common -- both health care and higher education are realms of American life in which government has undermined the operation of market forces and caused artificially high prices. These are two arenas in which the Democrats now propose to do exactly the wrong thing. Their reform reinforces old errors and will infinitely compound the problem of rising prices.” --columnist Mona Charen

“In his book ‘Dreams From My Father’ Obama gives the distinct impression that his gifts are too great for the smallness of our political stage. He regrets not having been born during the civil rights era when the grandness of the cause would have measured up to the grandness of his ambition. He is in search of something big that will allow him to make his mark on the world as Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King did. Hence, the defeat of ObamaCare would not just be par for the course in the rough-and-tumble world of politics for him. It would be

sign of his ordinariness, his mortality, and that, to him, is unendurable.” --Forbes columnist Shikha Dalmia

INSIGHT

“A fanatic is a person who can’t change his mind and won’t change the subject.” --former England Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965)

“There can be no prescription old enough to supersede the Law of Nature and the grant of God Almighty, who has given to all men a natural right to be free, and they have it ordinarily in their power to make themselves so, if they please.” --American lawyer and patriot James Otis (1725-1783)

DEZINFORMATSIA

Advocacy journalism: “Bottom line, what happens if you don’t get health care for this president? This is really all-or-nothing for the sense of his power, for his legacy. He’s invested so much in this in this first year. You’ve got to get this for him!” --NBC’s Andrea Mitchell to Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD)

“Why not be part of the process? Why not take what you consider to be an imperfect [health care] bill and at least attach some proposals that you support? ... How are we going to fix Congress and empower Congress to be able to pass the sweeping kinds of changes that we need in the country?” --ABC’s Elizabeth Vargas interrogating Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN)

Kamikaze Democrats: “Democrats will lose their seats over process, but they will take the chance because of the substance.” --ABC’s Cokie Roberts on health care

What happened to dissent being patriotic? “[I]t might take more than arm-twisting with some of the Democrats who voted against [health care] the first time around. It may take waterboarding or something of that nature...” --CBS’s Bob Schieffer

Nonsense: “I’ve never seen the Republican Party so narrow in its appeal. It’s basically come out and said, ‘Dis-invest in America, watch your pocketbook. Don’t do anything, don’t have any government.’ It’s forgotten eight years of sort of spendthrift behavior by President Bush. ... What do you make of the fact the Republican Party now isn’t a party of grand conservatism, any more? It’s a party of this narrow, little, nasty, don’t do anything party.” --MSNBC’s Chris Matthews

Newspulper Headlines:

Stop Talking or He’ll Never Shut Up: “Barack Obama: The Time for Talk Is Over on Health Reform” --InTheNews.co.uk ++ “Obama to Ohio Monday for Another Health Care Speech” --Chicago Sun-Times Web site

We Blame Global Warming: “Obama’s Health Bill Push Heats Up” --Associated Press

Where’s Eric Massa When You Need Him?: “Dodd Faces ‘Ticklish Position’ Going Alone on Financial Rules” --Bloomberg

Questions Nobody Is Asking: “Men: Will You Sit and Pee for the Planet’s Sake?” --Houston Chronicle Web site

Everything Seemingly Is Spinning Out of Control: “Earth Under Attack From Death Star” --Sun (London)

Bottom Stories of the Day: “Palestinians Threaten to Halt Peace Talks” --Associated Press

(Thanks to The Wall Street Journal’s James Taranto)

THE DEMO-GOGUES

Just words, just politics ... just the Constitution: “We have debated this issue now for more than a year. Every proposal has been put on the table. Every argument has been made. I know a lot of people view this as a partisan issue, but, look, the fact is both parties have a lot of areas where we agree -- it’s just politics are getting in the way of actually getting it done.” --Barack Obama

Arrogance: “The American people want to know if it’s still possible for Washington to look out for their interests and their future. They are waiting for us to act. They are waiting for us to lead. And as long as I hold this office, I intend to provide that leadership. I don’t know about the politics. But I know what’s right.” --Barack Obama (*We’re waiting for you to get out of the way so we can look out for our own interests, not have you do whatever you “know” is right whether we want it done to us or not.*)

Big Brother: “You know what? It’s been such a long time since we made government on the side of ordinary working folks, where we did something for them that relieved some of their struggles.” --BO

Non Compos Mentis: “Well, a lot of those folks, your employer it’s estimated would see premiums fall by as

much as 3,000 percent [sic], which means they could give you a raise.” --Barack Obama

Glass half empty: “I have no intention of not passing this bill. Let me say it in a positive way: I have faith in my members that we will be passing this legislation.” --House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)

She may be a dreamer: “Think of an economy where people could be an artist or a photographer or a writer without worrying about keeping their day job in order to have health insurance.” --Nancy Pelosi (*So the rest of us can pay for these unemployed artists and photographers to have insurance?*)

Democrats to defeat death! “Today, 70 Americans will die for lack of health insurance, 70.” --Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) (*So why don't most provisions in this bill kick in for four years?*)

VILLAGE IDIOTS

Never mind the cost: “Senator Brown comes from a state that has a health care plan that's similar to the one we're trying to enact here. We're just trying to give the rest of America the same opportunities that the people of Massachusetts have.” --White House adviser David Axelrod

Shut up, she explained: “[I]nstead of spending your energy attacking the parts of the president's [health care] proposal you don't like, you can use it to strengthen the parts you do.” --Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius

He blames global warming: “The odds have shifted toward much larger downpours. And we have seen that happen in the Northeast, we've seen it happen in the Northwest -- in both of those regions are among those that scientists have predicted for a long time would begin to experience much larger downpours.” --Al Gore

Hollywood chimes in: “I think the people running climate change denial campaigns are sociopaths.” --actress Lucy Lawless, a.k.a. “Xena: Warrior Princess”

SHORT CUTS

“House Democrats conjured a strategy Monday that would allow the House to avoid a vote on the health care bill. Instead they would deem the bill passed and send it to the president. We ordered Iraq not to look, this is for mature democracies only.” --comedian Argus Hamilton

“Last year, the House was passing bills without reading them. This year, they're passing bills without voting on them.” --former House Speaker Newt Gingrich

“What kind of leader sends congressmen out on a kamikaze mission in an election year and right before a recess? The kind of leader whose followers are diminishing in number.” --Human Events editor Jed Babbin

“Democrats, though, continue to close their eyes and cover their ears while loudly singing the la la song.” --The Washington Times' Kerry Picket

“President Obama would like the House to vote on his health care plan on either St. Patrick's Day or the day after. That means Congress will be voting on health care either when they're drunk, or when they're hung over.” --comedian Jay Leno

Veritas vos Liberabit -- Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus, et Fidelis! Mark Alexander, Publisher, for *The Patriot Post's* editors and staff. Read online at <http://patriotpost.us>

(Please pray for our Armed Forces standing in harm's way around the world, and for their families -- especially families of those fallen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, who granted their lives in defense of American liberty.)