

Reparations By Way Of Health Care Reform

By INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY | Posted Monday, July 27, 2009 4:20 PM PT

Legislation: Still believe in post-racial politics? Read the health care bill. It's affirmative action on steroids, deciding everything from who becomes a doctor to who gets treatment on the basis of skin color.

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President Obama is on the record as being officially opposed to reparations for slavery. But as with other issues, you have to sift through his eloquent rhetoric and go beyond the teleprompter to get at what he really means.

His opposition to reparations is based on the fact they don't go far enough. In a 2004 questionnaire, he told the NAACP, "I fear that reparations would be an excuse for some to say, 'We've paid our debt,' and to avoid the much harder work."

Never mind there are those who thought we apologized at Gettysburg and that an African-American president is a recognition of the hard work that has been done.

At a press conference with minority journalists last fall, candidate Obama was pressed for more detail on his reparations position. He said he was more interested in taking action to help people who were just getting by. Because many of them are minorities, he said, that would help the same people who would benefit from reparations.

"If we have a program, for example, of universal health care, that will disproportionately affect people of color, because they are disproportionately uninsured," Obama said.

This may be a goal of Obama's health care plan: the redress of health care disparities on the basis of race and the punishment of those believed to be responsible, such as greedy doctors who perform unnecessary tests and procedures and greedy insurance and drug companies lusting for profits.

In his health care plan published during the campaign, it was written that Obama and Biden will "challenge the medical system to eliminate inequities in health care by requiring hospitals and health plans to collect, analyze and report health care quality for disparity populations and holding them accountable for any differences found."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi repeated this when she addressed the NAACP this month, saying: "It is a moral issue for our country to reduce health disparities, whether in diabetes, asthma, heart disease, cancer and HIV/AIDS."

The racial grievance industry under health care reform could be calling the shots in the emergency room, the operating room, the medical room, even medical school. As Terence Jeffrey, editor at large of Human Events puts it, not only our wealth, but also our health will be redistributed.

Under the Democrats' plans, if a medical school wants to receive contracts and grants from the federal government, it must operate under a quota system and be able to prove it. On Page 909, the House bill states: "In awarding grants or contracts under this section, the (HHS) secretary shall give preference to entities that have a demonstrated record of the following: . . . training individuals who are from underrepresented minority groups or disadvantaged backgrounds."

Jeffrey points out that in the name of eliminating "disparities" in health care, under the House version of the bill, payment to providers under the public option becomes a sort of Pavlovian reward and punishment system.

"The secretary," says Section 224, "shall design and implement the payment mechanisms and policies under this section in a manner that — (1) seeks to . . . reduce health disparities (including racial, ethnic and other disparities)."

Everyone deserves the best health care and doctors. That will not happen under a plan that emphasizes affirmative action and leads to rationing.

As the case of the New Haven, Conn., firefighters shows, reverse discrimination is wrong and dangerous.

Whether it's that firefighter coming up the ladder, or the brain surgeon about to remove that tumor in your head, everybody wants that person to be the best regardless of race or ethnicity — and not admitted by quotas and promoted by political correctness.

That's what all Americans are owed.

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