



## Bluegrass Beacon

BY JIM WATERS

### **Read the fine print: There's more than one way to skin this cat**

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If, as the variation on the British adage states, “There’s more than one way to skin a cat,” there’s also more than one way to lose our liberty.

The nation’s leaders correctly have focused on external threats posed by Iran’s nuclear aspirations and cowardly terrorist plots. But terrorist bombs aren’t the only weapons that can bring a nation to its knees.

The fine print of a health care bill can destroy our economic freedom just as a bomb can disintegrate a building.

There are those who unknowingly lend support to policies that would cause our freedoms to degenerate. Thus we see a handful of folks — mostly elderly — [waving signs](#) in front of Humana Inc. offices in Louisville grouchily demanding an end to the evils of insurance companies, competition and profit in favor of a government-run health care system.

I don’t question their intentions. They aren’t overtly trying to destroy economic free choice. And yes, they have the right to protest. But ideas, not intentions, have the greatest consequences. Read the fine print in the proposed health care bill, and you realize that these ideas — carried to their logical conclusions — become treacherous.

The bill fosters the demise of Humana — and many other jobs related to the health care industry.

Even some Kentucky politicians have trouble seeing that. But who could blame them for not wanting to read [1,900 pages](#) of regulatory legislation?

Former President Ronald Reagan said that he “wondered at times what the Ten Commandments would have looked like if Moses had run them through the U.S. Congress.”

Still, while these congressmen’s “commercials” feature their mantra to “make health care affordable for all,” they surely should understand that part of their job is to uphold, protect and defend the Constitution, which includes reading the fine print in large, complicated legislation.

It’s there where a single-payer health care system is being created that mandates coverage, eliminates competition, determines end-of-life coverage, raises taxes to pay for illegal citizens’ care and increases dependence on government.

Perhaps the Food and Drug Administration could require a disclaimer be included each time an ad runs in support of the bill: “This plan could be dangerous to your economic liberty, your future, even your life.” Or, just include Andy Rooney’s warning: “Nothing in fine print is ever good news.”

Faulty assumptions can destroy liberty, too.

For example, I believe regulation – not necessarily *government regulation* – is necessary in order for an economy to survive and thrive. In fact, as Sheldon Richman points out in “[Regulation Red Herring](#),” published by the Foundation for Economic Education, there is no such thing as an unregulated market.

For example, Richman points out that the free market would not permit a seller of apples to charge \$100 per apple. Either someone else would offer to sell apples for much less, or consumers would switch to pears. That’s a regulated market – but not government regulated.

Proposed health care reform also ignores what happened as a result of Kentucky Kare in the 1990s. This universal system — similar to what’s being concocted in Congress these days — decimated our health-insurance system, driving dozens of providers out of the state, reducing coverage and causing premiums to skyrocket.

The problems with the current health care system are real, but not unsolvable. Costs are high and access is limited. But to assume that government regulation – instead of allowing the market to work – is the best way to solve the problem is faulty and more costly.

Thank goodness, government regulation isn’t the only — or best — way to “skin this cat.”

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