

Once again the Republicans and Democrats have convinced the electorate that rooting for one team or the other will make any difference. We may as well be picking between the Lakers and the Celtics for all of the difference the winner makes in our government. In fact, most of us act like sports fans and simply approve or disapprove based upon whether our favorite team won or not. Specifically, we have today the apparent win of Scott Brown over Martha Coakley. The Republicans are elated that the Democrat 60 vote majority in the Senate is now supposedly broken and therefore the federal takeover of healthcare is supposedly doomed.

I would certainly applaud the end of the prospects for even greater socialization of our healthcare if I could believe it was so. Instead the vote today simply provides a great opportunity to show how little difference there is between the Republicans and Democrats. Scott Brown was one of the architects behind Romneycare, the first fully mandated state socialized healthcare bill in the nation. That is right, two Republicans were major factors behind one of the first dominos to fall in what will soon be an avalanche of change in the way we manage our healthcare in this country. Mitt Romney excused this in the 2008 presidential primary as what had to be done in one of the bluest states in the country. I can only guess that Scott Brown feels the same way. So, how should we expect Scott Brown to proceed in the U.S. Senate? There is still a Democrat in the White House and Democrat majorities in both houses of Congress.

Not only do the Democrats still have majorities, a great deal of the supposed anger represented by the Brown victory was ginned up by Republicans for the wrong reasons. Voters were not persuaded that government should get out of the healthcare business, nor were they convinced that only state governments should regulate healthcare. Perhaps the most persuasive point that Republicans hammered on was that the current plan takes too much from that already existing failed government healthcare system known as Medicare. The problem is that the Republicans did not convince the voters that Medicare is broken, but instead scared voters into thinking current Medicare recipients would suffer loss of benefits. So instead of moving away from socialized medicine entirely, the Republican answer is that we can only afford to keep the current socialized system of Medicare.

Some will say that at least we can now prevent yet another fiscal and policy disaster in the form of Obamacare for a little longer. Perhaps the vote today does mean the end of the current proposal. However, failure of the Republicans to win on solid grounds like fiscal conservatism, constitutionally limited federal government, and states rights is effectively a loss. Why? Because the fundamental debate about the policy behind socialized medicine was never even engaged. Republicans conceded that the health care system was “broken” or “needed reform” and refused to even effectively question the authority of the federal government to implement grand new federal entitlements. In fact, it was not long ago that George W. Bush, a supposed right winger, pushed through the prescription drug benefits. Where were all of the conservative pundits when that pill was “shoved down our throats”?

Now, after a bunch of Tea Party demonstrations and the supposed repudiation of Obamacare as illustrated by the Scott Brown victory, are we really going to see a move toward fiscal conservatism? Please excuse me if I am not holding my breath. Government has already socialized healthcare, we voters have just been slow to recognize this reality. We are so busy worrying about co-payments that we have lost sight of the fact that government already

purchases more than 50% of the healthcare services in this country. Governments already dictate the terms of insurance policies, the pricing of insurance policies, the number of doctors, and the number and locations of health care facilities like hospitals and surgery centers. Yes, this is currently called regulation, but there really is no difference between excessive regulation and complete centralized control. The former Soviet Union could have claimed that they were not communists but simply prudent regulators. At some point the regulation is such that there really is no longer any influence of free markets and the system is effectively socialized. We long ago passed that point with healthcare and the election of Scott Brown is not going to change the situation.

There is nothing about the slight shift in power cause by the election of Scott Brown that changes the fact that government controls over half the healthcare marketplace directly and indirectly regulates the other half already. This election will not change the fact that Medicare and Social Security are bankrupt in that they will not have enough income to offset expenses in the coming years. We still have government directly expending almost 40% of our gross domestic product every year. Did anyone hear the Republicans advocating for the reduction of the deficit for the eight years leading up to 2008? I am sure that there were a few statements, but there was no real concern for ballooning debt expressed to the electorate. No Republicans campaigned on outrageous spending until it was the Democrats in charge of the spending. Now a big government Republican wins one election and people should be comforted?

The scam will continue. Just as the Democrats campaigned on restoring fiscal discipline leading up to 2008, the minority Republicans now say the same thing. The minority party always claims that the majority is spending irresponsibly. When the Republicans took over in 1994, we had a short respite from ever expanding deficits, but this quickly gave way to big spending, earmarks and corruption by the Republican majority. In 2008, the Democrats retook control and have done nothing to restore fiscal discipline. Party loyalists make excuses for their team such as “we are in a war” or “we can’t cut spending in a bad economy.” There will always be an excuse for the majority party to spend more money in an attempt to assure retention of the majority through buying votes. The pet project of the Republican team may be different from the Democrat team, but the irresponsible spending remains a constant.

As the Republicans look forward to Democratic carnage on Election Day 2010, I can only shake my head with disappointment that voters are falling for the scam once again. It does appear likely that the Democrat majorities will at least shrink if not disappear because people are frustrated with high unemployment and a sluggish economy. Unfortunately, neither the Democrats nor the Republicans even attempt to address the root causes of these issues. Instead they pander to their favorite special interest groups and seek to gain the popularity edge for the next beauty contest we call an election. We will once again be disappointed that the new regime behaves almost entirely just like the last. Unfortunately, we will have also forfeited more of our freedom and more heavily mortgaged our future with each repeated election cycle.

Both the Democrats and Republicans have successfully limited the competition for political office to a two party duopoly and have convinced the people that political parties are like favorite sports teams. We are supposed to be happy just because our team won, or complain to each other about our loss and redouble our efforts for the next game. We voters have fallen into the

trap of listening to the talking points and voting to make sure the other team doesn't win and have lost sight of the real issues. The news shows report more on the political game than the issues themselves. Voters do not vote for principle but against the other team. Until we voters remember that our country was founded on fundamental principles of freedom and self ownership, we will not change the endless cycle of government growth and political name calling.

The only way this can happen is if we as voters change our behavior. We have to study issues and develop a political philosophy. Some of us will most definitely conclude that a socialist, care-taker type of government is the best way to go. It would be nice if those voters would go ahead and proudly adopt the philosophy of socialism and quite making their candidates pretend that they are not socialists. Other voters will conclude that the moral majority should prevail and seek out an authoritarian political party that will enforce some flavor of "American values" or another. Other voters will adopt a more or less libertarian philosophy of limited government in both economic and social aspects of our lives. We as voters must become educated, adopt a philosophy, and then actually have the courage to vote for candidates that represent our views, rather than voting against the other team. If we do so, we will end the two party duopoly that always practices fraud and deceit to keep or regain the majority. We may not like the prevailing plurality political party, but we can be assured that we don't have two sides of the same coin debating whether heads is clearly superior to tails.

To my Democrat fellow citizens, do not despair too much, the push for more government solutions to real or imagined problems will continue even with Scott Brown in office. In fact, for the right price, his vote is likely for sale. Just exclude Massachusetts from the healthcare bill and promise not to spend too much money opposing his reelection in a few years and that should be sufficient. The Democrat Party already knows that votes can be won by promising more government goodies than the Republicans.

To my Republican fellow citizens, there really is no cause to celebrate too much. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and all of the largest companies with unfunded pension liabilities will lobby hard for socialized healthcare soon. Even if 2010 is good to the Republicans, you cannot be both the party of fiscal discipline and the candy man. Perhaps you can get the majority and claim the lion share of the political contributions, but the Republican Party is just as likely to complete the socialization of healthcare as the Democrats. In fact, Mitt Romney and Scott Brown have already shown you how that works.

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