

Republicans' Reckless Indifference Is Killing Thousands of Floridians

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You don't need to be a rocket scientist to understand that lack of health insurance increases your likelihood of dying prematurely and unnecessarily. You cannot afford regular check-ups and you defer seeking medical attention, often until it is too late.

One study estimated that the uninsured have a 25%-40% higher risk of dying prematurely and unnecessarily. Another study, undertaken before the Affordable Care Act became law, at a time when 45 million Americans lacked health insurance, estimated that 45,000 people were dying every year as a consequence, a ratio of one death for every 1000 uninsured.

There are 840,000 Floridians who are too poor to afford insurance but too "rich" to qualify for Medicaid (because their income is as "high" as 38% above the federal poverty rate). Their lives are under threat and without doubt some have already died or are dying as a result of the willful refusal to act by the Republicans who control the State House and the legislature.

How? Under the Affordable Care Act as originally passed, states were required to expand Medicaid to cover people whose income was 38% above the federal poverty rate. Even though the federal government provided 100% of the cost for the first few years, and 90% thereafter, the Supreme Court (in its infinite lack of wisdom) ruled that Congress could not force the states to accept the money and expand Medicaid.

As a consequence, 17 states – most in the South and all controlled by Republicans – have rejected the funds and refused to expand Medicare. Their arguments are without substance. For example, they claim that they can't count on the federal government to continue to provide 90% of the funding, despite the fact that the ACA specifically provides that federal funding will never fall below 90%.

Next they claim that even paying 10% will result in a huge increase in state spending. False again! Studies show that it actually reduces state spending because it [pays for costs states were already bearing](#) in other state programs.

The real reason they recklessly and heartlessly condemn their constituents to preventable death? A government that actually saved lives would be fundamentally at odds with the credo and world view of the modern Republican party, namely, "Government Is Bad (and Greed Is Good)." Even worse, those whose lives were saved would have Democrats to thank.

And that, in a nutshell, is why first Scott and now DeSantis are allowing thousands of Floridians

to die needlessly every year. Nothing can wash this blood off their hands.