

“Carnage”

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When Donald Trump blustered, “this carnage stops right here,” he was not only lying about conditions in America. He was also announcing, “the carnage starts now.” And it has. Carnage to the environment, to the economy, to life on Earth.

Unlike the fake carnage imagined by our Fantasist-in-Chief, it was not long ago that 45 million Americans lacked health insurance and a study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* (AJPH) estimated some 45,000 deaths *every year* were attributable to the lack of insurance. That began to change after Barack Obama was elected and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was passed. That carnage was real, and the Democrats did something about it.

Yet even as the ACA was saving lives, Republicans were working hard to ensure that Americans continued to die before their time. A conservative majority on the Supreme Court did its part to continue the carnage by overturning the ACA’s mandate that states expand Medicaid to cover individuals who earned too much to qualify for a subsidy under the ACA but too little to afford insurance without the subsidy. Instead, said the Court, the decision to expand must rest with the states.

Republican governors in 19 states then did their part by refusing to expand Medicaid, even though the ACA provided for the federal government to cover 100% of the added cost in the first three years and at least 90% thereafter. As a result, more than 6 million Americans were denied health insurance, 1.2 million of whom are Floridians. Based on the *AJPH* study cited above, it’s fair to charge Republicans with 6,000 and Rick Scott with 1,200 premature deaths *every year*. Think about that when you go to the polls in 2018.

But now Republicans are going for the brass ring. The Orwellian-titled “American Health Care Act” that passed the House is estimated by the Congressional Budget Office to knock off some 14 million people from the rolls of the insured next year – and 23 million by 2026. That translates to 14,000 dead next year, with the carnage rising to some 23,000 annually by 2016. ***That is the equivalent of multiple 9/11s every year. That is an awful lot of blood on Republican hands. Think about that when you go to the polls in 2018.***

Legislatively condemning tens of thousands to die prematurely may not be indictable in a court of law, but the 217 miscreants (all Republicans) who voted to repeal the ACA can and must be indicted in the court of public opinion and given their walking papers in the midterms, along with any Senator who votes to repeal.

So why are Republicans exposing themselves to the wrath of voters? Perhaps they believe voters will not notice; after all, Trump’s most rabid supporters have voted against their economic interests for decades. Of course, having voted against one’s very life may be a bridge too far,

even for Trump voters. Moreover, if the ACA *is* repealed, the realization that some of them committed suicide by ballot may actually pierce the fog of disinformation surrounding them. Assisting in their enlightenment *is the fact that the ten states whose residents will lose the most in financial aid if the ACA is repealed all gave their electoral votes to Trump.*

Or were Republicans afraid they'd be punished at the polls if they did nothing? After all, they've been promising voters for six years that they had a much better healthcare plan, so killing some supporters might seem preferable to being exposed as liars and scoundrels before the country and world (or, rather, those few parts of the world before which they don't already look like liars and scoundrels).

Actually, the real reason is that Republicans are less afraid of their constituents than of their billionaire donors (who, after all, are their real constituents). These folks always vote for their economic interests. They know repeal of the ACA will give them a huge tax cut, eliminating both the 0.9% surcharge on their wages and the 3.8% surcharge on their dividends and capital gains that help underwrite the subsidies for lower-income Americans.

So even if many of the little guys who voted for Trump get mad, or die, the few big guys who fund the Republicans will be richer and happier, and at the end of the day, they are all that that matter.