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WHY FOCUS ON REPEAL AND REPLACE?



By Stephen L. Bakke  July 29, 2017

Here's what provoked me:

I recently came across two quotes that made me rethink my oft repeated opinion that the fix vs. repeal/replace debate is attempting to make a distinction without a real difference. Here's what I found.

Here's my response:

Why Focus on Repeal and Replace?

The Republicans have failed to make headway reforming Obamacare, but their effort isn't over. And there will continue to be lots of politics in the "fix vs. repeal/replace" debate. Republicans won't consider anything that is a mere "fix," and the Democrats won't consider anything that smacks of "repeal/replace."

While analyzing the Republicans' strategy, let's recall two important representations that may justify the "repeal/replace" focus. Former HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius was responsible for implementing the ACA legislation. Two years ago, she spoke in Kansas City and a newspaper column the following day was headlined "Sebelius Says ACA Is Here to Stay." Why? She indicated confidence that ACA was so "intimately entwined" into our healthcare payment system that it wouldn't be possible to repeal it.

Echoing that sentiment, Nobel Prize winning economist Paul Krugman recently wrote an article in the New York Times titled "Three Legs Good, No Legs Bad." Quoting Krugman: ".....you can't change any major element of the (ACA) without destroying the whole thing.....all three legs of this stool are necessary. Take away any one of them, and the program can't work."

Those Obamacare experts are pointing out that ACA is unfixable. It's booby trapped! Repeal/replace is the only solution.