

CECI CONNOLLY WAS THE “PLAY” IN THE WAPO’S PAY2PLAY DINNER

Close to the end of OmbudAndy’s long assessment of his paper’s Pay2Play scandal, he includes this tidbit:

Brauchli conferred with Pelton about the salon dinners. At one point they showed up at the newsroom desk of reporter **Ceci Connolly, who covers health care**, which was to be the discussion topic of the July 21 dinner. Subsequently, she said, **"Charles asked me for some contact phone numbers and e-mails**, which I provided."

[snip]

On June 17, another Word document was provided by Pelton to The Post’s advertising staff soliciting a \$25,000 sponsorship – "Maximum of two sponsors" – for the July dinner. Under "Hosts and Discussion Leaders," it listed Weymouth, Brauchli and "Other Washington Post health care editorial and reporting staff." It said participants could "Interact with core players in an off-the-record format."

A week later, the flier was distributed to the ad sales staff.

At the same time, e-mails were being sent over Weymouth’s name to lawmakers and others inviting them to the July 21 dinner. **They said she, Brauchli and "health care reporter Ceci Connolly" were hosting the evening.** An accompanying invitation said it would be off the record and noted that it would be underwritten by a single sponsor, Kaiser Permanente. [my emphasis]

Somehow I just knew Ceci Connolly would be involved in this Pay2Play.

That's because she has spent the last month "reporting" stories that scold progressives for insisting on real reform. There was the article, for example, where she said,

Activists say they are simply pressing for quick delivery of "true health reform," but the intraparty rift runs the risk of alienating centrist Democrats who will be needed to pass a bill.

And falsely claimed Adam Green could offer no reason for a public option. Problem is—that's not what she asked him.

Connolly then asked me why progressives were picking a political fight on the public option, as opposed to another issue. I guess the fact that it's the #1 domestic issue of the day — one that affects millions of American families — wasn't explanation enough.

I figured she was looking for a quote summarizing the political stakes, so I thought for a moment and said, "The public option has become a proxy for the question of whether Democrats will stand on principle and represent their constituents."

I was quite proud of that answer. It summarizes what a lot of people are feeling — the public option is the "line in the sand" issue for Democrats, something Chris has written about here on OpenLeft several times.

Connolly's take on that quote:

Green, in an interview, was hard-pressed to articulate a substantive argument for the public plan but said that it "has become a proxy for the

question of Democrats who stand on principle and represent their constituents."

WHAT? Connolly asked me a question on the politics, and when I gave her an answer on that, she said I didn't answer on the substance?

More recently, Ceci Connolly reported on a poll and focused on the 80% who were satisfied with the quality of their care, and not the majority who are dissatisfied with the health care system overall in this country.

Ceci Connolly is a reporter with an egregious bias for the status quo and unquestioning beltway "centrism" (never mind that the beltway is far to the right of the country on this).

What a surprise, then, that she was not only the beat reporter dangled out to participants in the Pay2Play dinner, but was also asked to help facilitate the presence of her sources.

But don't worry, the WaPo wasn't selling coverage to those who want to silence those looking for real reform. They appear to have already done so.

Update: Valley Girl has more on Ceci "Pay2Play" Connolly's work.

From Howie's WaPo link here: Ceci Connolly sez- article linked above July 4:

Obama Urges Groups to Stop Attacks— Advocates Should Turn Attention to Promoting Legislation, President Says

In recent weeks, liberal bloggers and grass-roots groups such as MoveOn.org, Democracy for America, Service Employees International Union and Progressive Change Campaign

Committee have targeted Democratic Sens. Ben Nelson (Neb.), Mary Landrieu (La.), Arlen Specter (Pa.), Ron Wyden (Ore.) and Dianne Feinstein (Calif.).

Ceci Connolly from June 28 WaPo article-
here.

Health-Care Activists Targeting Democrats- Sniping Among Liberals May Jeopardize Votes Needed to Pass Bill

In recent days– and during this week’s congressional recess– left-leaning bloggers and grass-roots organizations such as MoveOn.org, Health Care for America Now and the Service Employees International Union have singled out Democratic Sens. Ben Nelson (Neb.), Mary Landrieu (La.), Ron Wyden (Ore.), Arlen Specter (Pa.) and Dianne Feinstein (Calif.) for the criticism more often reserved for opposition party members.

If nothing else she knows how to use cut and paste. And, I thought, well... she has an agenda... let’s see...