

# “YOU LIE!”

I spent a good part of a book beating up on George Bush for lying in an address to Congress in an effort to generate support for a policy that was being challenged on the merits.

So while I’m not suggesting that protecting a secret deal with health insurance companies is as despicable as starting a war of choice by crafting careful lies to Congress—it’s nowhere close—when I read BT’s piece...

We now know that the White House, in secret negotiations with industry lobbyists, quietly killed the public option in July 2009. But when the President gave a nationally-televised, joint address to Congress on **September 9, 2009**, he implied that the public option was still on the table.

...an additional step we can take to keep insurance companies honest is by making a not-for-profit public option available in the insurance exchange. Let me be clear – it would only be an option for those who don’t have insurance. No one would be forced to choose it, and it would not impact those of you who already have insurance. In fact, based on Congressional Budget Office estimates, we believe that less than 5% of Americans would sign up. [...]

It would also keep pressure on private insurers to keep their policies affordable and treat their customers better, the same way public colleges and universities provide additional choice and competition to students without in any way inhibiting a vibrant system of



private colleges and  
universities.

It's worth noting that a strong  
majority of Americans still  
favor a public insurance option  
of the sort I've proposed  
tonight.

... I couldn't help but remember Joe Wilson's  
accusation, right in the middle of that address  
to Congress, "You lie!" Wilson got the  
individual assertion wrong, but he called the  
theater for what it was.

All of which, in turn, reminded me of  
discussions noting that the bloggers who were  
most supportive of Obama's health care reform  
were the same bloggers who had been most  
credulous about Bush's claim for the necessity  
of war with Iraq.

Again, just on the basis of expanding Medicaid  
to millions of new people and smart changes to  
Medicare, there's absolutely no comparison  
between Obama's health care reform with the  
merits of the war Bush was pushing with his  
lies.

But it does make me wonder why this theater ever  
works at all anymore, as Presidents continue to  
taint their once-cherished soap boxes with false  
statements that quickly become exposed as such.