

BIDEN'S OPPOSITION TO MEDICARE FOR ALL: IT'S ALL ABOUT THE BILLIONAIRES, BABY

Joe Biden has lots of reasons why he opposes the Medicare for All plan favored by Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren. But it's all about the money.

THREE THINGS: HEY YOU, MR./MS./MX. PISSED-OFF

So you're angry – welcome to the club. Get your war face on and let's kick ass. This is an open thread.

VERTICAL DEMAND CURVE: WHEN YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE ISN'T A CHOICE

We prohibit extortion – except when it's health care. This is an open thread.

A NEOLIBERAL ARGUMENT FOR MEDICARE FOR ALL

Why are industries which aren't in health care providing health care programs at all? Why can't we provide health care for everyone so that businesses can focus on their own businesses?

ANOTHER KIND OF RECOVERY: POST-MARIA PUERTO RICO AND HEALTH CARE CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Hope you don't need an IV soon. I'll be thinking of people who do while Trump bloviates tonight about the state of our disunion.

PAY NOW AND PAY LATER: WHAT LOSING CHIP MEANS TO AMERICA

Let me tell you something you secretly believe, secret even from yourself, because you are an American: poor and sick children aren't going to amount to anything. This is true whether you're a Republican or a Democrat.

SPACED IN TIME TRASH TALK

Welp, moving from Killer Trash Talk to the things that are this weekend takes a lot. Insanity abounds, and is all around. Your healthcare? Yes, that is getting screwed hard. JCPOA (the Iran anti-nuke deal) yes, that too. If it affects the world in at least semi-positive way, the current President is blowing it all up. The fact that a black man might have even touched on any subject seems to infuriate the dementia ridden sundowning asshole in the West Wing even more.

It is who and what we life forms are now. And it is sickness in every regard, domestically and internationally. Trash Talk was designed to be a refuge from such things. I just cannot anymore. So, if that is a problem, I am sorry. Hopefully we will not stand by, and will not back down, while assclowns like Donald Trump cravenly politicize even common sports entertainment to soothe the 30% base they so cherish.

Nope.

Puerto Rico is dying in their own streets. Northern California is burning. People are trying to ride out the fire in swimming pools as their houses burn around them. While the Trump Administration and GOP sit on their hands, when they are not actively trying to make the entire situation worse. The fuckers are flying on jets, flying flags and making coins in their own image.

But, hey, the NCAA is moving on. Not sure anybody thought anything different would happen in Chapel Hill. Begging the question as to what happens to Louisville, another legacy NCAA basketball program. The NCAA under the terminally lame leadership of Mark Emmert will never change.

In the pros, it is getting hard to figure who is the bigger asshole. Is it Goodell and the NFL, or is it the, at this point, ignorant scorched earth strategy of Jeff Kessler and the NFLPA? The NFLPA is making an ass of itself in trying the everything and the kitchen sink theory as to Zeke Elliot. The NFLPA had a sympathetic plaintiff, Brady, and a supremely tenuous case by the NFL based on simple physics and chemistry. But then the NFL won in the 2nd Circuit. Zeke Elliot is not an all American kid with multiple championships. He is an abusive punk from Ohio State that is lucky the NFL did not find an aggravating act from when he pulled down a woman's blouse in public during a parade. If you think Elliot has the better case here, you don't try cases in real courts.

The thing is, whether under federal or state law, and in this case collectively bargained law, the arbitration rules....and the rules ARE "relaxed"....and control. It is about the process, not the facts. I, and a lot of others, tried to argue in the face of this in both Brady and Peterson. Same in Bountygate prior to those two cases. Those arguments were all made in cases with far more appealing clients than a repetitive malefactor like Zeke Elliot. He will serve the suspension, it is only a question of whether he and Jeff Kessler are smart enough to do so soon, or make it later, when it will really hurt a likely playoff team. We shall see whether the NFLPA scorched earth insanity prevails over the inters of ~~Homer Simpson~~, er Jerry Jones and the Cowboys.

The games go on. The Natinals really ought to still be around, but the Cubs put them to rest. The Yankees somehow overcame Cleveland. Hard to not think the Tribe was the better team, but they didn't close the deal, and the Yankees did. That said, the conference championships look truly awesome. I think the Astros are not only a better team, but have some juice right now as opposed to the Yanks. Not betting a lot of real money on that, but I think so. The Dodgers are what the Yankees used to be. The best team that

all the money in the world can buy. But Chris Hayes made a Trump for Cubs deal with the devil last year, and I hope it still holds, and the Cubs win. If we "have" to have Trump, let the Cubbies win again.

Syracuse obliterated Number 2 Clemson already. Man, that was ugly. So was the job an average Cal did on Pirate Mike Leach and Washington State. Utah at USC should be interesting. Washington at ASU here might be as well, but Chris Peterson is a light years better coach than ASU's Todd Graham, so ASU likely to get blown out, even at home.

Back to the pros: Philly already topped the Panthers, thanks to a good game by Wentz and a horrible one by Newton. Won't always be that way, Panthers are dangerous if they get in the playoffs. Skins host the Niners. Will Kirk Cousins be playing on the other team next year? The Pack at Vikings looked really interesting when it looked like Sam Bradford was returning. Less so now, but Case Keenum can produce and they are in Minneapolis with that damn horn they blow. I'll take Rodgers and the Cheese, but may be a great game.

My game of the week is the Buccos at Cardinals right here in the Big Toaster. Debut of Anthony Peterson at RB for Phoenix. Carson Palmer has quietly played superb QB so far this year for the Cards....when he is not getting murdered from bad, nee atrocious, O-Line play. If Arizona's constantly remade O-Line can gel and protect the old man, it will be a hell of a game. Not going to bet on that, but just saying. Rams at Jags might actually be interesting. Glad that matchup is, for once, not in London. Other game of the week is unquestionably Scribe's Steelers at Arrowhead to see the Chefs. I don't for one second think Big Ben has lost a step, even if he may finally be maturing. But I am not sure that other forces in that locker room are unified the way past Steeler teams are. This will be a HUGE game for Pittsburgh, and less so for KC. I'll take the upset on this one.

Okay, that is that. Another week. Another dime.
Another dollar. Thank you for being here, and
send some love to Puerto Rico and Napa.

THREE THINGS: SO MANY QUESTIONS, SEPTEMBER EDITION

So many questions have piled up, needing answers
– I had to take time out to put bits and pixels
to digital paper. Brace yourself.

FINANCING MEDICARE FOR ALL

If you only read mainstream media you'd think
Bernie Sanders' Medicare for All bill was
terrifyingly expensive. An opinion piece behind
the paywall in the Wall Street Journal cites a
couple of studies with huge headline numbers
like \$2.5 trillion dollars in the first year,
from the Urban Institute. Taxes will soar,
government takeover of health care blah blah
blah. It comes from centrist Democrats like
Jonathan Chait and Ezra Klein who I saw in an
appearance on Seth Meyer's show. Here are two
things to bear in mind in self-defense.

1. In 2015, we spent about \$3.2 trillion on
health care in the US. There is a cool graphic
here showing where it was spent and who paid
that amount. Maybe the cost of health care
covering everyone for the kinds of things the
Affordable Care Act requires would cost more
than that. (The Sanders Plan covers other
services as well as those under the ACA, but

let's ignore that because I can't find numbers.) We calculate the additional amount we would need by adding the cost of all uninsured people and the cost of the care that people with insurance can't afford because of deductibles and other co-pays, and subtracting the savings from the new plan. Any analysis that doesn't start with this is bullshit.

It's true that the Sanders plan would change who pays and how much, so someone would have to redo that cool graphic I mentioned. Some businesses would pay more, others less, and there would be a change in corporate taxation as deductible costs of insurance change. Some individuals would pay more and others less. But whatever those changes might be, the amount we need to raise isn't frightening, and practically everyone will be better off.

It's easy to see the savings from negotiating drug prices, lowering the reimbursement to doctors and hospitals, reducing excess profits from the health insurance companies, and reducing the costs of administration throughout the health care business.

It's also easy to see that the additional costs are not that high. Approximately 9.1% of us were uninsured in 2015, so the cost might be as high as 10%, or \$320 billion. That doesn't seem too terrible when the savings are deducted. It will be easy to finance that if we want to. I have a long list of things to cut if anyone cares, starting with dismantling the carceral state.

2. We need to think clearly about taxation. We live in a fiat money system; the US is sovereign in its own currency and cannot go bankrupt. I've read *Modern Monetary Theory* by Randall Wray and many shorter pieces and I am convinced. I could make an interesting argument from MMT about this whole matter, but I won't and I not going to focus on that. If single-payer a hard sale, convincing the devotees of Econ 101 (course title: My Neoliberalism) about MMT is hopeless. Actually with the excellent Stephanie Kelton as a teacher and leader I could well be wrong.

Check out this on the Twitter, and follow her if you don't already.

I agree with Warren Mosler, another MMT theorist, that taxes for revenue are obsolete. But that doesn't mean that taxes are obsolete. Quite the contrary. Mosler quotes from a 1945 speech by Beardsley Ruml, chair of the New York Fed, to the American Bar Association. Ruml gives four grounds for taxation other than revenue:

1. As an instrument of fiscal policy to help stabilize the purchasing power of the dollar;
2. To express public policy in the distribution of wealth and of income, as in the case of the progressive income and estate taxes;
3. To express public policy in subsidizing or in penalizing various industries and economic groups;
4. To isolate and assess directly the costs of certain national benefits, such as highways and social security.

We can make a case for taxes and other measures to support Medicare for All relying solely on those four principles, without explicitly discussing MMT. If we do that, we lay a foundation for future tax issues, and for a sensible discussion of tax reform more broadly. I have a list of tax changes that will meet those standards. How about that NASCAR deduction for a starter. We raise a bit of money and get rid of a bit of corruption with one change.

This is a great teachable moment for MMT, just as the government shutdowns were with the heated arguments about the trillion dollar coin. I know Kelton and others will push on the MMT side. We need to win this, and we can't afford to fight on two fronts. In particular, it isn't helpful to attack people who don't want to argue about MMT on the way to fixing our health care system. People like me.

THREE THINGS: IN THE DEBRIS FIELD AFTER HEALTH CARE 'FREEDOM' ACT

Some bits related to 'the show' late last night on the Senate floor, and not. This is an open thread.