



Ignoring The Gorilla In The Room

Obama And Biden Have Acknowledged That Medicare Is A Fiscal Disaster Waiting To Happen But Broke Their Promise To Confront The Problem

IN 2007, THEN-SEN. JOE BIDEN SAID THAT MEDICARE WAS THE “GORILLA IN THE ROOM” AND THAT ALL OPTIONS SHOULD BE “ON THE TABLE”



[Watch Biden Call Medicare The “Gorilla In The Room”](#)

Biden Cited Medicare As A “Gorilla” And Said We Have “To Put All Of It On The Table” In Terms Of Reform. BIDEN: “Social Security is not the hard one to solve. Medicare -- that is the gorilla in the room, and you’ve got to put all of it on the table.” RUSSERT: “Everything?” BIDEN: “Everything -- you’ve got to.” (NBC’s [Meet The Press](#), 4/29/07)

- **Biden Said He Would “Absolutely” Put All Options On The Table In Regards To Social Security And Medicare, Including Changes To The Age Of Eligibility And Cost Of Living.** MSNBC’S TIM RUSSERT: “[S]enator, we have a deficit. We have Social Security and Medicare

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looming. The number of people on Social Security and Medicare is now 40 million people, it's going to be 80 million in 15 years. Would you consider looking at those programs, age of eligibility, cost of living, put it all on the table?" BIDEN: "The answer is absolutely -- you have to. One of the things that the political advisers say to me is, 'Whoa, don't touch that third.' Look, the American people aren't stupid. It's a real simple proposition." (NBC's ["Meet The Press"](#), 4/29/07)

In 2010, Obama Agreed That Medicare Is "The 800-Pound Gorilla In The Room"



[Watch Obama Acknowledge "The 800-Pound Gorilla In The Room"](#)

Obama Said Medicare Is "The 800-Pound Gorilla." OBAMA: "But you're absolutely right that we're going to have to keep on making these changes to continue to make it stronger. And that will affect not just Medicare; it'll affect the entire health-care system, because there's no doctor out there who doesn't see Medicare as the 800-pound gorilla." (President Barack Obama, [Remarks At A Discussion With Ohio Families On The Economy](#), Columbus, OH, 8/18/10)

- **Obama Said "We've Got To Refresh And Renew Medicare, To Make Sure That It's Going To Be There For The Next Generation As Well."** OBAMA: "But in the same way that Social Security has to be tweaked, because the population is getting older, we've got to refresh and renew Medicare, to make sure that it's going to be there for the next generation as well. And the key problems are not just that more people as they retire are going to be part of Medicare." (President Barack Obama, [Remarks At A Discussion With Ohio Families On The Economy](#), Columbus, OH, 8/18/10)

RATHER THAN CONFRONT THE "GORILLA IN THE ROOM," OBAMA HAS CHOSEN TO DODGE AND DEMAGOGUE

Obama's Budget Doesn't Include The Solutions He Said He Would Offer Americans

PROMISE: In 2008, Then-Sen. Obama Said That Entitlement Reform Is Something That He Would Like To Do In His First Term. BROKAW: "Would you give Congress a date certain to reform Social Security and Medicare within two years after you take office? Because in a bipartisan way, everyone agrees, that's a big ticking time bomb that will eat us up maybe even more than the mortgage crisis." OBAMA: "Well, Tom, we're going to have to take on entitlements and I think we've got to do it quickly."

We're going to have a lot of work to do, so I can't guarantee that we're going to do it in the next two years, but I'd like to do in the my first term as president." (Sen. Barack Obama, [Remarks At Presidential Debate](#), Nashville, TN, 10/7/08)

BROKEN: The Washington Post: "The Final Budget Of His First Term Does Not Reflect The Leadership On Issues Of Debt And Deficit That Mr. Obama Once Vowed."

(Editorial, "Obama's Budget Falls Short, But It Beats Many Alternatives," [The Washington Post](#), 2/13/12)

- **Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner Admitted The Administration Doesn't Have "A Definitive Solution" To The Long-Term Problems Posed By Our Entitlement Programs.** REP. PAUL RYAN: "Because we got 10,000 people retiring every day, and healthcare costs going up..." TREASURY SECRETARY TIMOTHY GEITHNER: "That's right. We have millions of Americans retiring every day, and that will drive substantially the rate of growth of healthcare costs. You are right to say we're not coming before you today to say we have a definitive solution to that long-term problem. What we do know is, we don't like yours." ([Testimony Before The House Committee On The Budget](#), U.S. House Of Representatives, 2/16/12)
- **Los Angeles Times: Obama "Offers No Real Solution To The United State's Long-Term Fiscal Problems."** "The day after the Greek Parliament approved another round of deep spending cuts in the face of violent protests, President Obama released a budget proposal for the coming fiscal year that offers no real solution to the United States' long-term fiscal problems." (Editorial, "What About The U.S. Debt?" [Los Angeles Times](#), 2/14/12)

The Washington Post's Dana Milbank: "The White House's Budget For Fiscal 2013 Begins With A Broken Promise, Adds Some Phony Policy Assumptions, Throws In A Few Rosy Forecasts And Omits All Kinds Of Painful Decisions." "The White House's budget for fiscal 2013 begins with a broken promise, adds some phony policy assumptions, throws in a few rosy forecasts and omits all kinds of painful decisions. Even then, the proposal would add \$1 trillion more to the national debt than Obama contemplated a few months ago — and it is a non-starter on Capitol Hill, where even Senate Democrats have no plans to take it up. It is, in other words, exactly what it was supposed to be: a campaign document." (Dana Milbank, Op-Ed, "Obama's Budget Games," [The Washington Post](#), 2/13/12)

- **Milbank: "All The Sports Talk Amounted To A Head Fake, Or Perhaps A Quarterback Sneak, Because The Real Game The White House Was Playing Was Dodgeball: Evading Anything Resembling A Serious Budget Proposal."** (Dana Milbank, Op-Ed, "Obama's Budget Games," [The Washington Post](#), 2/13/12)

Obama Has Resorted To Playing Politics Rather Than Leading

PROMISE: Obama Said That Entitlement Reform Won't Happen If People Demagogue Proposals To Fix The Problem. OBAMA: "And I raise that not because we shouldn't have a serious discussion about it. I raise that because we're not going to be able to do anything about any of these entitlements if what we do is characterized—whatever proposals are put out there—as, well, you know, that's—the other party is being irresponsible; the other party is trying to hurt our senior citizens; that the other party is doing X, Y, Z." (President Barack Obama, [Remarks To The GOP Issues Conference](#), Baltimore, MD, 1/29/10)

- **Obama: "That's Why I Say If We're Going To Frame These Debates In Ways That Allow Us To Solve Them, Then We Can't Start Off By Figuring Out, A. Who's To Blame, B. How Can We Make The American People Afraid Of The Other Side."** (President Barack Obama, [Remarks To The GOP Issues Conference](#), Baltimore, MD, 1/29/10)

BROKEN: Despite Being Dubbed The "Lie Of The Year" Obama Still Accuses Republicans Of Attempting To "End Medicare As We Know It." OBAMA: "Governor Romney and his allies in Congress,

they think that if we just get rid of more regulations on big corporations and give more tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans, if we end Medicare as we know it, make it a voucher system, then somehow this is all going to lead to jobs and prosperity for everybody.” (President Barack Obama, [Remarks At A Campaign Event](#), Council Bluffs, IA, 8/13/12)

- **Politifact: “Lie Of The Year 2011: ‘Republicans Voted To End Medicare’”** (Bill Adair And Angie Drobnic Holan, “Lie Of The Year 2011: ‘Republicans Voted To End Medicare’,” [Politifact](#), 12/20/11)
- **“Politifact Debunked The Medicare Charge In Nine Separate Fact-Checks Rated False Or Pants On Fire, Most Often In Attacks Leveled Against Republican House Members.”** (Bill Adair And Angie Drobnic Holan, “Lie Of The Year 2011: ‘Republicans Voted To End Medicare’,” [Politifact](#), 12/20/11)

The Washington Post: “Democrats Have Effectively Scared Seniors As A Political Tactic For Many Years.” (Editorial, “On Medicare, Reverting To A Well-Worn Strategy,” [The Washington Post](#), 5/8/11)

- ***The Washington Post: “If The Goal Is To Deal With The Long-Term Fiscal Challenge, Though, The Democrats’ Political Success Is Apt Only To Prolong The Gridlock And Make The Eventual Solution That Much More Painful.”*** (Editorial, “On Medicare, Reverting To A Well-Worn Strategy,” [The Washington Post](#), 5/8/11)

Former President Bill Clinton: “I Think The Democrats Are Going To Have To Be Willing To Give Up, Maybe, Some Short-Term Political Gain By Whipping Up Fears On Some Of These Things ...”

CLINTON: “I think the Democrats are going to have to be willing to give up, maybe, some short-term political gain by whipping up fears on some of these things — if it’s a reasonable Social Security proposal, a reasonable Medicare proposal. We’ve got to deal with these things. You cannot have health care devour the economy.” (President Bill Clinton, [Remarks At Peterson Fiscal Summit](#), Washington, D.C., 5/25/11)

- ***New Hampshire Union Leader Called The Democrats’ Attacks On Medicare “Shameless.”*** “The non-partisan Politifact.com site rated that claim a ‘pants on fire’ lie. It noted that Medicare continues under the Ryan plan, and funding for it increases. But being caught in a lie hasn’t dampened the Democrats’ enthusiasm for it. Yesterday, Rep. Steve Israel, D-N.Y., head of the DCCC, said the DCCC will continue to use that attack. Shameless.” (Editorial, “Medicare In NY: Terrifying Seniors Works,” [New Hampshire Union Leader](#), 5/26/11)
- ***The New York Times: “Sooner Or Later, Democrats Will Have To Admit That Medicare Cannot Keep Running As It Is ...”*** “Sooner or later, Democrats will have to admit that Medicare cannot keep running as it is — its medical costs are out of control, and a recent report showed its trust fund running out of money in 2024, five years earlier than expected. ... It might require, as Mr. Clinton put it, giving up some short-term political gain, but voters might also appreciate a dose of honesty and realism in their political diet.” (Editorial, “Running On Medicare The Right Way,” [The New York Times](#), 5/25/11)
- ***USA Today: “Unless The Democrats Propose A Viable Money-Saving Alternative, The Future Of Medicare Might Be The Least Of Their Problems.”*** “Just as surely, Democrats know that the simple math of health care will eventually shred the social safety net they seek to protect. Demonization of the Ryan plan might be a short-term political winner, but unless the Democrats propose a viable money-saving alternative, the future of Medicare might be the least of their problems.” (Editorial, “‘Medicare’ Won’t Save Medicare,” [USA Today](#), 5/25/11)