

Misplaced Hate Regarding Healthcare

Democrats and others who advocate Government healthcare often accuse market advocates of being cold and heartless. They say we want the poor to die in the streets. I'm reminded of Bastiat's *The Law*, wherein he observed:

We disapprove of state education. Then the socialists say that we are opposed to any education. We object to a state religion. Then the socialists say that we want no religion at all. We object to a state-enforced equality. Then they say that we are against equality. And so on, and so on. It is as if the socialists were to accuse us of not wanting persons to eat because we do not want the state to raise grain.

It's as though they think that without their particular healthcare policy, there would be no healthcare whatsoever, or that the private sector would contain no voluntary "welfare" programs (even though many already exist toward this end), they would be insufficient, or their callousness and inefficiency would reach apocalyptic levels.

Of course, this hatred is misplaced. We don't want people dying in the streets. We want people to get the best, most affordable healthcare they can, and we contend that the free enterprise system is the best way to work toward that goal.

Despite the fact that the private sector **does indeed** provide substantial amounts of resources with the intent of helping the poor, the accusation that we are cold and heartless is still fairly popular. But such citations, while valuable and compelling, are offered in response to what I think is likewise a misplaced focus regarding the elements of the argument.

The argument against Government healthcare isn't necessarily based on efficiency or quality, it's also based on the problem of "taxation." Libertarians and anarchists obviously have no qualms about the democrats giving more of their money to (hopefully private) programs to help the poor. I suspect many of us are sympathetic to such causes and are willing to help as well, if possible. The problem, which is so often overlooked, is that all Government programs are predicated on the idea of forcing *other* people to fund them. When we argue against Government healthcare, we are arguing against the fundamental nature of its funding (which is tied to the efficiency and quality arguments), not against the availability of quality, affordable healthcare for the poor. We too want the best services available for the lowest price, but we're not willing to use the violence of the State to get

them. The economic consequences will be grave, and the ethical implications are abhorrent.

I imagine most government healthcare advocates have the best of intentions, but it's hard to view such individuals as noble and caring when their main (and often only) proposition to help the poor is to force other people to do it.