



Obamacare Is a Perfect Example of Why the Left Has Won for 85 Years
March 13, 2017

In "[Medicaid 'Win' for Ohio's Republicans Will Lead to Future Losses](#)" dated October 22, 2013, released shortly after Governor John Kasich pushed Medicaid expansion through the Controlling Board, with a disappointing assist from Speaker William Batchelder who replaced two "no" votes with "yes" votes the morning of the vote, Opportunity Ohio Visiting Fellow Mary McCleary noted:

Polling shows that Ohio Republican and independents voters overwhelmingly are against Medicaid expansion under Obamacare and the additional deficit spending that comes with it...Aside from a purely budgetary standpoint, it should be noted that 75 percent of Medicaid recipients in Ohio self-identify as Democrat voters, while only 13 percent are Republican voters. This statistic should serve as a warning as Republicans further the culture of government dependency fundamental to liberal-progressive policies.

If the new Medicaid expansion enrollees follow the same voting pattern as existing enrollees, a significant majority of these Ohioans will vote Left in the coming years.¹

As of the latest data, [694,453 Ohioans are enrolled](#) in Governor Kasich's expanded Medicaid program, which is roughly 23% of all Medicaid enrollees. The monthly cost for Medicaid expansion is [\\$451 million, or \\$5.4 billion](#) per year, with the [remaining Medicaid costs](#) hitting \$16.5 billion per year. Medicaid spending [consumes nearly half](#) of Ohio's General Revenue Fund budget. With 100% of current Medicaid expansion being funded by federal deficit spending, the costs of these new enrollees will add billions to the national debt. As those costs are shifted to Ohio taxpayers, it will put even more strain on Ohio's state budget, crowd-out other spending priorities, or require tax hikes. One must ask: why do certain politicians put the interest of 6% of Ohioans ahead of the remaining 94 percent?

Roughly three-and-a-half years after Governor Kasich expanded Medicaid, a Republican-controlled Congress is [moving to repeal Obamacare](#), including reforming Medicaid, with the support of President Donald Trump. The proposed legislation is [opposed by both liberals and moderates](#) such as Governor Kasich (goes too far) and conservatives such as Congressman Jim Jordan (doesn't go far enough). With finite funding, policymakers must make tradeoffs by focusing resources on the truly needy (i.e., those at or below the federal poverty rate, children, and the elderly) versus working adults without children.

As [highlighted in the Washington Post](#), there is "a risk that President Trump may sell out his working-class, white base by going along with congressional Republicans who want to cut deeply into safety net programs that benefit those voters.... [but] major cuts to the Medicaid expansion[] carry political peril." The "political peril" is a loss of support from those voters for Republicans in the 2018 mid-term elections and President Trump's 2020 reelection effort. Those dates likely drove the decision to push funding reductions into 2021.

¹ We take no position on the electoral choices of those voters, but merely use the survey data to show why the Left has used bigger government to expand its voter base to gain, maintain, or regain control.

This possibility vividly illustrates why the progressive Left has been winning since Franklin Roosevelt’s presidential election victory in 1932. Over the last 85 years, the Left has used the same formula to significantly expand the federal government by adding entitlement programs that create a permanent class of people dependent upon the federal government. These voters will then vote for those politicians promising to continue or expand those programs and against those politicians threatening to reform or end those programs. Ms. McCleary’s warning in 2013 is proving to have been prophetic.

Program	Date Enacted	President	Crisis/Opportunity
Social Security, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, & Disability Insurance	August 14, 1935	Franklin Roosevelt	Great Depression
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	August 31, 1964	Lyndon Johnson	War on Poverty
Medicare & Medicaid	July 30, 1965	Lyndon Johnson	War on Poverty
Supplemental Security Income	October 30, 1972	Richard Nixon	???
State Children’s Health Insurance Program	August 5, 1997	Bill Clinton	Budget Surplus
Obamacare with Medicaid Expansion	March 23, 2010	Barack Obama	Great Recession

The above list doesn’t include all federal assistance programs. Collectively, all of the entitlement programs [consume roughly \\$2.6 trillion](#) of the federal government’s annual \$4.1 trillion budget, or 63% of all federal spending. The federal government [collects](#) approximately \$3.6 trillion in revenues, with the rest of federal spending being covered by [deficit spending](#). Not including those added under Medicaid expansion since 2013, roughly [52% of households received government](#) assistance.

The reality is neither the federal government nor the state of Ohio can afford to maintain entitlement spending at its current level, which is expected to grow at a rate greater than inflation until those programs, along with the interest on the national debt, bankrupt America in thirty years or less.

With a majority of U.S. households receiving government benefits (even if earned such as Social Security or Veterans benefits), those households represent a huge voting block. Special interest groups spend hundreds of millions of dollars annually to keep those voters aware of any attempts by policymakers to reform or to end any of the entitlement programs. Those same groups also actively lobby policymakers to preserve and to expand those programs. As a result, federal entitlement programs never end, but, at best, are morphed into new federal programs under different names.

The bottom line is that if Republicans can’t repeal and replace Obamacare, including Medicaid expansion, in the disastrous state it is in after taking total control of the federal government, then any hope for further entitlement reforms should be extinguished. As philosopher Alexander Tytler stated:

A democracy will continue to exist up until the time that voters discover that they can vote themselves generous gifts from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates who promise the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that every democracy will finally collapse due to loose fiscal policy.

Policymakers on the Right won’t be able to out-promise those on the Left. In 2016, a majority of citizens – some against their own interest – voted for candidates who promised to repeal and replace Obamacare. As [we’ve argued](#), under competitive federalism system, states should be [free to design and fund health care programs](#) aimed at vulnerable populations as they deem necessary without federal funds subsidizing their decisions. Some states will want gold-plated programs; other won’t. Either way, the [dependency created by Obamacare’s Medicaid expansion](#) must end. Period.