

Potomac Diary

The Power Behind the Throne

By **ARTHUR D. POSTAL**

Published 3/7/2011

 [Subscribe to Life & Health](#)



 [Print This Article](#)  [Normal Text](#)  [Large Text](#)

Pop quiz: who would you say is really running the Democrats these days? Nancy Pelosi? Harry Reid? Hillary Clinton? Barack Obama? If you answered any of these three names, you would be wrong, but don't feel bad. An informal poll done by *National Underwriter* yielded the same kinds of answers.

The real answer, of course, is New York senator Charles Schumer, who is assuming a larger-than-life role for Democrats as they seek to pull out of the electoral tailspin climaxed by the electoral "shellacking" administered to them last November.

In January, Schumer engineered a coup d'etat on Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's staff reminiscent of events that formerly occurred only in South America and the Middle East.

And, he is now playing a key role in shaping the Democratic position in bipartisan talks aimed at establishing a bipartisan framework for deficit reduction.

In fact, even while President Obama attended a meeting a few weeks ago of the bipartisan group of senators holding the deficit-reduction talks, it was Schumer who articulated the Democrat position while the president silently looked on, according to several sources.

Schumer headed the Democratic senator re-election campaign during the period when the Democrats started picking up Senate seats, but stepped down two years ago in favor of Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J.,

But that has not slowed Schumer down. Known as a prodigious fundraiser and an aggressive, no-holds-barred advocate, it is to him that the Democrats have turned in their hour of great need. For Schumer, his rise to prominence carries no small burden. In fact, he might just be playing for the highest stakes in his political career to date.

For example, the Republican party picked up 68 seats in the House in the November election, and now have control of the House by the greatest margin since 1928. And, with Democrats having to defend 28 seats in the Senate in 2012, and Republicans only 10, the odds are great that the Republicans will win control of both chambers in 2012. It is up to Schumer to figure out a solution, as improbable as one appears for the Democrats.

But the biggest factor in Schumer's emergence as a key player in the 2012 electoral battle is broad complaints that Reid and Pelosi have done a poor job in defending Democrats against Republican attacks, especially on the health care bill.

For example, a prominent nonpartisan research organization, ProCon.org, just released a new report indicating that the individual health care mandate was a Republican idea.

According to Procon, the concept of the individual health insurance mandate originated in 1989 at the conservative Heritage Foundation, now one of its fiercest and most strident opponents of the health care reform package that passed Congress last year.

According to Procon, in 1993, Republicans twice introduced health care bills that contained an individual health insurance mandate. Advocates for those bills included prominent Republicans who today oppose the mandate including Orrin Hatch, R-Utah; Charles Grassley, R-Iowa; and former senators Robert Bennett, Utah, and Christopher Bond, Missouri.

In 2007, Democrats and Republicans introduced a bi-partisan bill containing the mandate.

And, Procon says, in 2008, then presidential candidate Barack Obama was opposed to the individual mandate. He said so in a Feb. 28, 2008 interview on the Ellen DeGeneres show about his divergent views



“Reid and Pelosi have done a poor job of defending Democrats against Republican attacks, especially on the health care bill.”

RECENT ISSUES

- ♦ March 7, 2011
- ♦ February 21, 2011
- ♦ February 7, 2011
- ♦ January 24, 2011
- ♦ January 10, 2011
- ♦ December 20 2010
- ♦ December 6 2010
- ♦ November 22 2010

ARCHIVED ISSUES

--Select Issue--

6

FROM OUR PARTNERS

Senior Market Advisor

The industry leader in providing proven sales, marketing and business success stories for the successful advisor.

ADVANCED MARKETS ADVISORFX

Your source for insurance and financial planning concepts and creative sales and tax planning strategies.

HIGHLINE DATA LEADING THE WAY WITH INSURANCE ANALYTICAL SOLUTIONS

Highline Data's Insurance Analyst PRO is the market's premier source for insurance industry statutory and GAAP financial filings. View our [suite of online advanced search and analytical tools](#).

PRODUCERSWEB.com

The Industry's largest and fastest growing community of insurance agents, producers and financial advisors. 340,000+. Membership is FREE. [Join today.](#)

MOST READ ARTICLES

- [PPACA: Vinson Stays Ruling Declaring Act Unconstitutional](#)
- [House Passes 1099 Fix Bill](#)
- [PPACA Stars at IRS Budget Hearing](#)
- [Discussing and Defining Strategic Partnerships](#)
- [NAIC to FSOC: So, What Was That About Transparency?](#)
- [Bernanke: Public Employee Benefits Costs Threaten Sustainability](#)
- [McRaith Top Candidate for FIO Post](#)

RELATED ARTICLES

- ♦ [Best Enemies](#)
 - ♦ [A Pound of Cure](#)
 - ♦ [Potomac Diary](#)
 - ♦ [Taking the Pulse of the Policy](#)
 - ♦ [NCOIL Backs NAIC Suitability Model, OKs Balance Billing Model](#)
- The National Conference of Insurance Legislators has

with Hillary Clinton.

To deal with the public relations battle that the Democrats obviously lost to the Republicans, Schumer replaced the staff, including the chief of staff, and the public relations people, in the majority leader's office.

As a result, Democrats in Congress say that the new staff is much better in anticipating Republican attacks, and moving to counter them. Time will tell, of course, but for the moment, they are being given credit for making House Republicans rethink their strategy of pushing through deep cuts in the current government budget, and for reducing the likelihood of a government shutdown, either late last week, or even later this month.

As for the bipartisan deficit reduction talks, being held at the White House by six senators, it is Schumer who is demanding that Social Security be taken off the table for the moment and dealt with separately, therefore sustaining the old principle that Social Security is the so-called "third rail" of America politics, dealt with by politicians only at their peril.

endorsed an annuity suitability model developed by state insurance regulators and approved a health insurance balance billing model of its own.

- [Life Settlement Provider Sues Insurer](#)
A life settlement provider says a life insurer has used illegal methods to interfere with its ability to buy a convertible term life policy.
- [PPACA: Lindeen Fights for Authority to Implement Individual Coverage Mandate](#)
The Montana insurance commissioner is trying to persuade lawmakers in her state to let her continue to implement Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act provision that will require many individuals to own health coverage starting in 2014.

Want more news? [Visit our Insurance News page](#) and [subscribe](#) to our daily eNewsletter!

COMMENT ON THIS ARTICLE

Name:

Email (will not be published):

Subject:

Comment:

We need to make sure you are a human. Please solve the challenge below, and click the I'm a Human button to get a confirmation code. To make this process easier in the future, we recommend you enable Javascript.



Type the two words:

[Try another challenge](#) [Get an audio challenge](#) [Help](#)

3/7/2011 5:57:45 PM

Art Eckman, Financial Advisor, CLU, IAR

[Defending Health Care Reform](#)

It should not be difficult for Nancy Pelosi or Harry Reid to "stand up" for the legislation they wrote and sponsored! The Republicans are against it, but not for the "good of the nation"! Rather, because it contains tax increases for high income earners and those that enjoy tax free expensive coverage. Which it should! They want states to have the right to reform or not reform, this would lead to "chaos" for those who travel or move, and potentially leave 50 different plans to be debated and compared for next 100 years! We have so many other problems in this country and the world, let's put Health Care Reform to bed! It has been passed and is being put into place over next few years! We can revisit the reform legislation in 5 to 10 years to see how much was achieved and at what cost! MOVE ON TO SOLVE OTHER PROBLEMS! The Deficit, The Destruction of the MIDDLE CLASS, Unemployment, Lack of a Coherent ENERGY POLICY, a "Bloated" Defense Dept., waste and fraud in Medicare and Medicaid, as well as the waste and fraud in State and Local governments! Shall I continue with the problems that need solving NOW! NOT LATER? I am one of many "Concerned Americans" who are busy working and providing for their families, and have no time for the "Talking Heads on Cable News", the "Tea Party Simpletons" or the any Politician who "twists the facts", tells "half-truths", or simply "lies" to the American people!



Summit Business Media
5081 Olympic Boulevard
Erlanger, Kentucky 41018



Site

- Home
- Magazine
- Insurance News
- Channels
- Web Exclusives
- Blogs
- Personalities
- Newsletters
- Directories
- Events
- Subscribe Now

Resources

- About Us
- Contact Us
- Press Releases
- Marketplace
- Career Center
- Subscription
- Advertising
- Media Kits
- Site Map
- RSS Feeds
- Privacy Policy
- Reprints

• [National Underwriter STORE](#) ...

Channels

- Advanced Markets
- Annuities
- Baby Boomers
- Companies/Financial
- Life Insurance
- Distribution
- Life Settlements
- Long Term Care
- Opinion
- Regulatory, Legislative, Tax
- Retirement Income Planning
- Technology
- Worksite Marketing

Get Connected

