

The Conscience of a Liberal



PAUL KRUGMAN

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Conservative Origins of Obamacare

Here's a useful resource for [tracking the history](#) of the ideas embodied in the Affordable Care Act.

The essence of Obamacare, as of Romneycare, is a three-legged stool of regulation and subsidies: community rating requiring insurers to make the same policies available to everyone regardless of health status; an individual mandate, requiring everyone to purchase insurance, so that healthy people don't opt out; and subsidies to keep insurance affordable for those with lower incomes.

The original Heritage plan from 1989 had all these features.

These days, Heritage strives mightily to deny the obvious; it picks at essentially minor differences between what it used to advocate and the plan Democrats actually passed, and tries to make them seem like a big deal. But this is disinformation. The essential features of the ACA — above all, the mandate — are ideas *Republicans* used to support.

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ABOUT PAUL KRUGMAN

Paul Krugman is an Op-Ed columnist for The New York Times.

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BOOKS

- Principles of Economics, 2nd ed. (2009)
- The Return of Depression Economics and the Crisis of 2008 (Dec. 2008)
- The Conscience of a Liberal (Oct. 2007)

Some links to stuff I've written bearing on macroeconomic policy. Read all of them, and you'll have a good sense of where I'm coming from.

- A Dark Age of Macroeconomics
- A History Lesson for Allan Meltzer
- America's Chinese Disease
- China's Water Pistol
- Core Logic
- Currency Wars and the Impossible Trinity
- Japan 1998
- Liquidity Preference, Loanable Funds, and Niall Ferguson
- Macro Policy In a Liquidity Trap
- More on Friedman and Japan
- Myths of Austerity
- Optimal Fiscal Policy In a Liquidity Trap
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