

# PAY2PLAY CONNOLLY'S SOURCES ARE "MYSTIFIED"

Before I get into the jist of this story, note two things.

First, Ceci Connolly, the reporter the WaPo was selling in their Pay2Play salons, is one of the bylined authors. (In fact, Connolly was the one recruited to convince Nancy Ann DeParle–Obama's health care czar and the recipient of millions for serving on the board of corrupt health care companies–to attend, which sort of makes Connolly a broker rather than a reporter.)

And second, Connolly and her co-author egregiously break the WaPo's rules on anonymity, which Ombud Andy Alexander reviewed just a few days ago.

Those are the two details I'd use to answer Aravosis' puzzle—are these guys lying or idiots?

Neither. They're trying to pivot their failure back onto progressives.

Here are the anonymous quotes that, for some reason, Ceci and friend couldn't see fit to present in a way that accorded with the WaPo's anonymity rules.

President Obama's advisers acknowledged Tuesday that they were unprepared for the intraparty rift that occurred over the fate of a proposed public health insurance program, a firestorm that has left the White House searching for a way to reclaim the initiative on the president's top legislative priority.

Administration officials insisted that they have not shied away from their support for a public option to compete with private insurance companies, an idea they said Obama still prefers to see in a final bill.

But at a time when the president had hoped to be selling middle-class voters on how insurance reforms would benefit them, the White House instead finds itself mired in a Democratic Party feud over an issue it never intended to spotlight.

"I don't understand why the left of the left has decided that this is their Waterloo," said a senior White House adviser, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "We've gotten to this point where health care on the left is determined by the breadth of the public option. I don't understand how that has become the measure of whether what we achieve is health-care reform."

"It's a mystifying thing," he added. "We're forgetting why we are in this."

Another top aide expressed chagrin that a single element in the president's sprawling health-care initiative has become a litmus test for whether the administration is serious about the issue.

"It took on a life of its own," he said. [my emphasis]

Remember how we got to the stupid co-ops. It was pitched as a way for Jim Messina's former boss, Max Baucus, to find a bipartisan solution such that we'd get Chuck Grassley on board with health care. And now that Grassley and John Kyl have made it crystal clear that a bipartisan deal was always a farce, and now that the White House has declared it may go forward without Republicans, those whose real reason to prefer the co-ops (so they can remain on the health care donor gravy train) need to find a way to reclaim the co-ops. They need to find a way to suggest that, even with the hope of a bipartisan bill dead, there's still a reason to consider the co-ops.

So they trot out to the industry's Pay2Pay stenographer, get her to break her paper's rules on anonymity to hide that this is really more spin from (probably) Rahm and Messina, and try to distract both from the importance of the public option (to control costs and offer a real option), and from the fact that it has been pitched as part of the plan from the start. They've got to go out there and disappear some history such that they can retain the co-ops as the conventional wisdom "compromise"—compromise with whom!??—in the absence of having a legitimate block opposing the progressives. They pretend that this has "taken on a life of its own" while ignoring that Candidate Obama gave it that life. They invoke DeMint's Waterloo comment to insinuate that the progressives are the ones being unreasonable, rather than those who'd like to stay on the gravy train and are willing to tank this initiative to make sure their clients continue to rip off Americans.

This is an attempt to retain the appearance that the Blue Dog and Senator4Hire position remains the center, even after removing the far right Republicans out of the coalition.

And Ceci Connolly was right there to help her corporate-backed sources do so, even without having required those corporations to pony up at the Pay2Play table first.