

BREAKING: C STREET MEMBER SAYS HEALTH CARE BILL WILL FAIL

In an article lacking some pretty important follow-up questions, Jodi Kantor tucks in this judgment, from C Street member Bart Stupak.

He is trying to pass the health care overhaul, he insists, not sabotage it, and **predicts that the legislation will ultimately collapse for reasons apart from abortion**. But he will be blamed anyway, he is sure.

"I get the distinct impression that I'm the last guy the president wants to see," he said. [my emphasis]

Now, at one level, I think Stupak is right on. The women in both the House and Senate have proven themselves willing to allow Stupak and Ben Nelson to use health care as a means to restrict access to reproductive care in this country; there's no reason to believe that that will change.

But I am curious why, then, Stupak believes health care will fail.

There are, IMO, two possible reasons. The most obvious would be if the House refused to accept the Senate's Hocus Pocus Excise tax. A couple of the corporatist Democrats in the Senate, having refused other, more effective cost control measures (like drug reimportation and a public option) insist on the Hocus Pocus Excise tax, claiming they need to do something to control cost. So if the House were to refuse to accept that as is, it might well scotch the bill.

But there's another possibility: that those same corporatist Democrats refuse to accept ways (probably subsidies) to make the bill remotely affordable to the middle class. That would be news. Because it would mean that Stupak, who is

not himself a Blue Dog but who may know their mood on this, may have reason to believe we'll actually lose conservatives in the House (or those same obstructionists in the Senate) if this bill becomes anything but a plan to turn the American middle class into serfs handing over chunks of their income away to the health care industry.