

OBAMA'S RE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN: DESTROYING THE COUNTRY TO SAVE IT

Much of the discussion about this Jeff Zeleny piece has focused on Obama's apparent consideration of cutting regulations that "affect the economy."

The president intends to offer at least some progressive proposals to help regain a fighting posture that he has not had since the health care debate, but a provision is also being discussed to place a new moratorium on some regulations that affect the economy, excluding health care and financial rules. The proposals are likely to infuriate an already unhappy Democratic base. [my emphasis]

Greg Sargent suggests we ought to wait to see precisely what Obama means by this; I agree, not because I have any faith in Obama, but because the syntax of this line is so strange. Does Zeleny mean "moratorium on new regulations"? A "moratorium—does that mean temporary or permanent—on existing regulations"? Who is doing the discussing here, Mr. Passive Voice Journalist?

In short, I think Zeleny has failed his job as stenographer.

Which is why I'm even more intrigued by this passage.

The Republican candidates, collectively and in distinctive ways, continue to cast him as the foil against whom they ran so successfully in 2010: a big-government liberal who has expanded regulations, created uncertainty for business and failed to revive the economy, with millions more Americans out of work than when he took

office. They portray him as an unsteady leader who is unequipped to turn around a country in economic crisis. [my emphasis]

Again, the meaning here is unclear: Who is the "they" here? Does Zeleny mean to invoke the themes all Republicans used to run against Obama in 2010? Or just the ones running for President. I'm not sure Ron Paul "ran against" Obama in 2010, though Michele Bachmann and Rick Perry did. Both complained about health insurance reform, but largely in terms of "freedom" and (particularly in the case of Perry the separatist, state's rights), not regulations. Perry complained about emissions restrictions, which is certainly a regulation, but Obama's already caved on that front.

Both Bachmann and Perry got caught hypocritically replying on government pork while attacking Obama's stimulus bill, and it's fair to say that Perry used stimulus funds to balance TX's budget, and given the number of government jobs TX has relied on, it's therefore safe to say Obama's stimulus created jobs Perry is taking credit for.

And both Bachmann and Perry called Obama a socialist.

But the theme ignores one of the big things Republicans, as a whole, ran against Obama on in 2010: "cutting Medicare" (in the health insurance reform).

Which makes me wonder whether this interpretation of the 2010 election is Zeleny's ... or the Obama team's?

It seems a critical issue because some seems to have simplified the reasons for the Democrats' shellacking in 2010, particularly given that voters still largely blamed Bush for the economy in 2010 (though they're doing so less now).

In any case, if Obama thinks he can embrace policies that will stop two fools who called a President who has coddled banksters "a socialist" from repeating that claim—if Obama

believes that spoiling our air and water will
make Bachmann and Perry be nice to him—it's
simply not going to work.

But I do worry that's what he has in store.