

WHY THE 2016 SENATE ELECTION IS SURE TO BE ABOUT OBAMACARE, AGAIN

Mitch McConnell already announced how the GOP plans to retain the Senate in 2016: ObamaCare.

Again.

In his press conference today, he said that one tweak they'll make to ObamaCare will be to eliminate the individual mandate, which is one of the least popular parts of the law. That will pass immediately, probably before the first January snowfall. It'll probably, on that first go-around, even get a few Democratic votes.

Obama will then veto the bill.

Then the GOP will take it up – probably in the Senate – for an override vote.

Democrats will be faced with the choice of voting to uphold Obama's veto. Or making the politically far more popular vote, helping the GOP to override Obama's veto.

One way or another it's a huge win for the GOP. If they override the veto, the Executive will have to jump through major hoops to make insurance attractive and affordable enough (ha) to keep enrollment high enough it works for insurers. If they don't override the veto – meaning fewer than 12 Democrats vote to override it – then retention of the very unpopular mandate will be the issue the GOP runs on in every Senate race next cycle.

There are currently expected to be 10 Democratic seats up for reelection in 2016, so technically the Dems could free those 10 to vote with the GOP to help them avoid a very unpopular vote. But that doesn't include several of the Democrats who are most likely to vote with the GOP on the mandate in any case (people like Jon

Tester, for example).

In any case, it's an obvious play for Mitch to do, and one with huge upsides for the GOP whichever way it turns out.

Mind you, by 2016, the benefits of ObamaCare will also finally be more evident (and if the GOP overturns Medicaid in states where it has vastly expanded coverage, especially KY and AR, that'll be a huge issue for Republicans to defend against). But the GOP clearly intends to continue to make it an electoral problem for the Democrats.