Hillary Lite Is Really A Heavy

June 23, 1994 by Phyllis Schlafly

Bob Dole says he will be glad to let the November elections be a referendum on the employer mandates in Clinton's health care bill. So much, so good, because public opinion opposes mandates.

But the Republican Senators' alternative is just as unacceptable. "Vote for me," they seem to be saying, "and we'll put you in an HMO." Twenty Republican Senators are co-sponsoring the Chafee bill, known as Hillary Lite, which would force most Americans into HMOs even though there is absolutely no evidence that people prefer HMOs to traditional care.

No wonder President Clinton says he is "going to work with" Senator John Chafee to have "a bipartisan health care" bill. Realizing that his own 1,342-page bill cannot pass, Clinton is grabbing onto the Chafee bill so that he can get most of what he wants under another name.

John Chafee (RI) is the last of the unreconstructed Rockefeller Republicans in the U.S. Senate. He believes in Big Government, i.e., more federal spending, more federal control, with dictates and mandates forced on the American people who are presumably too stupid to make their own decisions and spend their own money.

Make no mistake about it: The Chafee bill is just as destructive to patient freedom and to high-quality medical care as the Clinton bill, but the Chafee bill is more dishonest. It doesn't come right out and threaten to put Americans in prison for Health Care Crimes, but the iron fist is in the velvet glove nonetheless.

The Clinton bill has taken a beating in the last few weeks because it would be financed by mandates (taxes) on employers. The Chafee bill would instead put mandates (taxes) on individual workers.

That's an improvement? You have to be kidding! The whole idea of taxing individuals (instead of employers) to pay for the giant federal takeover of the health care industry is offensive to a free society.

The Chafee bill would require every American worker to buy a health insurance policy with a standard benefit package determined by a five-person federal commission appointed by Clinton. Of course, what is in or out of the package will be politically determined and totally irrelevant to how you might want to spend your money.

When the government forces you to fork out your own hard-earned cash, that's a tax. When the government decides how that money is spent, that is totalitarian control, because your fate will be in the hands of the politicians and bureaucrats in a new health care monitoring bureau in Donna Shalala's Department of Health and Human Services.

While the Chafee bill doesn't overtly force Americans to pay taxes directly to a

Clinton Regional Alliance, it accomplishes the same result by putting a low ceiling on the tax deductibility of the health insurance you are forced to buy. This will amount to a large tax increase on working Americans.

The Chafee bill requires all health insurance plans to adopt "community rating," which means that everybody pays the same health tax whether you are young or old, and whether your lifestyle is healthy or you are a drug addict. Of course, this means a huge tax increase on younger and healthier Americans.

This also means that the smaller insurance companies, which write real insurance based on risk, will be driven out of business. That will get rid of competition for the five big insurance companies (Aetna, Cigna, Travelers, MetLife, and Prudential) and give them a rich payoff for the big investments they have made in managed care.

The real purpose of the Chafee bill is to force all Americans into managed care groups, commonly known as HMOs. HMOs are growing because employers are forcing their employees into them, but a Johns Hopkins study reported that workers don't like them - especially when they get sick and discover how care is rationed.

The bottom line is, there is a big difference between choosing a plan when you are healthy, and choosing your doctor when you are sick. Under HMOs, you only get to see a doctor the HMO is willing to assign to you.

Another feature of HMOs is even worse than not being able to choose your doctor. In HMOs, physicians are paid more if they provide less care! In an outrageous conflict of interest, the HMO gatekeeper physicians receive bonuses if they refuse to refer you to a specialist. That's the mechanism by which HMOs are expected to "reduce health care costs."

When workers are dissatisfied with HMOs, lat there is little they can do about it (except quit their job) if their employer puts them in HMOs. However, if your Senator forces you into an HMO, you can retaliate at the ballot box.

But the time to get after your Senator is BEFORE any bill is passed, not after. You need to find out immediately if your Senator is one of the 20 co-sponsoring the Chafee bill. Tell him to get off and instead support Individual Medical Savings Accounts.