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Galston on the Dem's Problem

Michael Sean Winters | Sep. 21, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

Bill Galston is always worth reading and his post over at The New Republic [1]highlights the Democrats' dilemma precisely: They can't run on their record nor can they run from it.

It is perhaps too late to try and rehabilitate the public's image of key accomplishments of the past two years. The financial rescue was necessary, but people do not reward politicians for averting a worse disaster when the disaster we got was plenty bad enough. What is truly alarming, however, is the failure of the Democrats to sell their own health care plan. At the time it passed, I wrote that they needed to keep framing the issue or else it would be framed by the Republicans. Every congressman and senator who voted for health care should have, by now, made a household name of some child who now has health care as well as a pre-existing condition, when before the reform, all the child had was a pre-existing condition and a family about to go bankrupt caring for him. Remember Ryan White, the child whose case of AIDS became the occasion for a massive shift in perceptions about that dreaded disease?

Now, the health care reform has been framed entirely by those who wish to repeal it. The President needs to take the lead on pushing back, defending his record and those who voted for it. It may be too late to sway indpendent voters before November, but it is not too late to get Democrats riled up to defend what has been a long-standing objective of their party. The current strategy of ignoring the issue is not working.

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[1] http://www.tnr.com/blog/william-galston/77805/polling-on-democratic-legislative-record