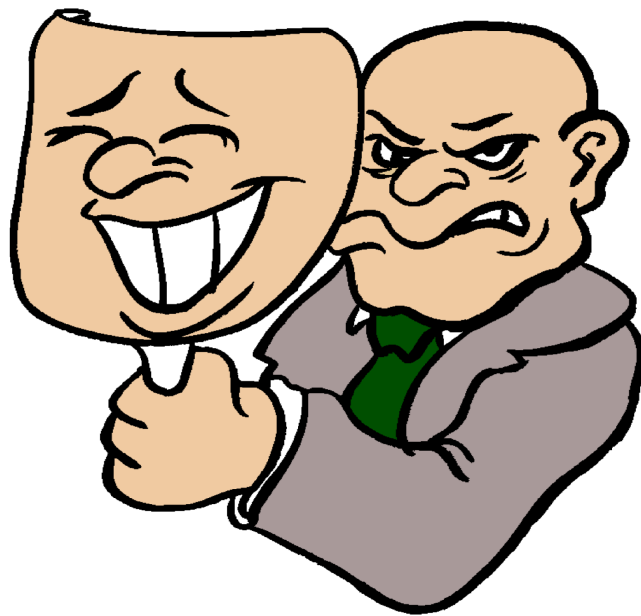


THE HEALTH REFORM PLAN TOWN HALL MEETING

– THE NON-MUSICAL –

a one-act play

© by Clyde James Aragon



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CAST

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN
REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER
CITIZEN #1
CITIZEN #2
CITIZEN #3
CITIZEN #4

COMEDY: 10 pages. **6** characters to be played by: **3** men; **3** woman.

SYNOPSIS: Curious, but informed citizens, meet at a town hall meeting to ask questions of their representatives on Health Care Reform. This is a ten-minute comedy play about the health care 'reform' bill and is a humorous way of looking at a very scary situation.

PROPS: 6 folding chairs

* * * This play is being distributed free of charge and the author, Clyde James Aragon, only asks that should it be performed or read, no admission be charged and that the author be given credit as having written it. * * *

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(on a bare stage, two politicians, seated in folding chairs, face four citizens intent on asking the politicians questions on their health reform plan)

CITIZEN #4 (addressing the audience and then sitting down): The other day

there was a town hall meeting in Montana over the new health reform bill

which was presented by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and passed by the

House of Representatives. The public was invited and allowed to ask

questions of the two members of the House of Representatives,

Representative Bullhorn and Flowmaster, who showed up. Many things were

said and, after adjourning quietly after three hours of questioning, these

excerpts were extracted from the minutes of that meeting:

CITIZEN #1 (raising hand and then speaking): Representative Bullhorn, the new

House health care plan is almost 2,000-pages long. How do you expect

anyone to read it, let alone understand it?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: We, meaning your government, are teaming

up with the Marvel Comics people to develop a comic book character called

Health Reform Man who will explain, in simple laymen terms, what our

health reform proposal is all about.

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CITIZEN #2: Will Cleopatra, Queen of the Vampire Underworld, feature in this?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Yes, and after explaining what our plan is about, she, Health Reform Man, and the A.C.O.R.N. Posse will go out and fight the various nemeses of our plan such as Greedy Insurance Monster, Private Fee-For-Service Doctor Thing, Alarmist Talk Show Host Ogre, and, of course, everyone in the Republican Party with the exception of moderate Republicans who want to hitch their star to a winner.

CITIZEN #1: Won't a comic book be considered propaganda?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: No. What people are saying against this plan *is* propaganda. Our comic book is info-entertainment. And it will be distributed free of cost through the mail, at welfare offices, and in hospital waiting rooms everywhere. Right, Representative Bullhorn?

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: We want everyone in America to have health care and the only way to accomplish that goal is for government to provide it.

CITIZEN #1: This is just socialized medicine.

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: What else would you expect? We're social creatures. We socialize. We're sociable. We go to ice cream socials, we join the PTA, we volunteer to wash cars on the weekend. Could we give to the social people of this country anything less than a plan which doesn't take into account their inbred social nature? I daresay not.

CITIZEN #1: But you're taking away choice.

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: No we're not. There's so much choice in our plan you can't help but want it. Especially if you're sociable. However, if you're anti-social you'll be able to pay a small annual fee and opt out, leaving yourself to find your own health care in backroom alleys, parking lots, through self-help books, and on the Internet.

CITIZEN #3: Why should we pay any fee?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Actually, this isn't really a fee. It is a yearly reminder that a better way of life is available through your government.

CITIZEN #4: Won't illegal aliens be covered?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: No. Absolutely not.

CITIZEN #1: But all you'd need would be a few court rulings and they'd be in.

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: That'll never happen.

CITIZEN #2: What about space aliens. Would they be covered?

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: Of course space aliens won't be covered. That would break the system.

CITIZEN #2: Since we're on the subject, will this health plan cover space-related diseases?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Like what?

CITIZEN #2: Euphoria, for example.

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: SRDs won't be covered.

(Representative Flowmaster whispers into Bullhorn's ear)

Uh, wait. An amendment has been introduced covering space-related diseases but only as brought to earth by NASA space missions.

(Representative Flowmaster again whispers into Bullhorn's ear)

Uh, an amendment to the amendment has been introduced which covers all space-related diseases.

CITIZEN #1: Your plan calls for end-of-life counseling. Is euthanasia covered by this plan?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Absolutely not.

CITIZEN #4: Isn't abortion a form of euthanasia? That's going to be covered.

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: Abortion is the removal of a troublesome human-like blob of protoplasm that, for all intents and purposes, is not human. Except in Hawaii where it's considered a type of chicken nugget.

CITIZEN #2: I love chicken nuggets. Will free chicken nuggets come with this plan?

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: Yes, along with the special sauce of your choice.

CITIZEN #1: Poll after poll says Americans don't want this plan. Yet you seem intent on forcing this down our throat – the public be damned. Isn't the Democrat Party returning us to the days of Taxation without Representation?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: The Democrat Party always represents the people, some more than others.

CITIZEN #3: Didn't Taxation without Representation lead to the American Revolution?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Americans, at that time, were protesting the lack of government involvement in their lives. We shall fulfill that nascent yearning.

CITIZEN #2: In the song "*Heartache Tonight*" by The Eagles, they sing:

"There's gonna be a heartache tonight/A heartache tonight, I know/There's gonna be a heartache tonight/A heartache tonight, I know". Does this refer to a real heartache or an existential heartache and would break-ups be covered by this plan?

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: We believe The Eagles referred to an ontological heartache which, most definitely, would be covered. The pain of breaking up can't be ignored as it was in the previous administration which, as we all know, wanted to kill everyone and eat their dripping internal organs.

CITIZEN #4: You say the plan would only cost 900 billion dollars. How do you know that for sure?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Because we're your representatives.

We would never lie to you. The only ones who would lie are Republicans and conservatives who lie about everything.

CITIZEN #1: You're saying this plan will cost about 900 billion dollars. Isn't that just an introductory price?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: No, it really, truly, cross my heart is what it will cost.

CITIZEN #3: Still, how do you expect to pay for this?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: We're proposing, among other things, a millionaire tax. I think the greedy, filthy rich should have to pay back the money they've stolen from this country.

CITIZEN #1; All you talk about is taxing the rich. You believe they're just going to willingly go along with your plan and turn their money over to you?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Yes.

CITIZEN #1: So you're assuming the rich are stupid, then?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Oh, believe me, the rich are very stupid.

CITIZEN #3: Aren't you a millionaire yourself?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Honestly, I've been working so hard ever since I came to Washington I haven't had a chance to look at my bank statement. Nevertheless, if I'm a millionaire, and I'm not saying I am, but if I might possibly be a millionaire, I'll be subject to this new tax after taking into account congressional expenses, refunds, postage, envelopes, and all the time I donate to worthy causes.

CITIZEN #4: What worthy causes?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Puppies. I lead the House caucus on puppy welfare. Damn it, no one's going to mistreat puppies in this country if I have anything to say about it.

CITIZEN #2: That's wonderful. I have a puppy. Her name is Sheila.

CITIZEN #3: What are the other ways you propose to pay for this?

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: We're going to introduce a tax on all medical devices such as monitors, x-ray machines, pacemakers, things like that.

CITIZEN #2: Do Band-Aid brand bandages constitute a medical device?

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: If applied properly.

CITIZEN #4: What else?

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: Lipstick.

CITIZEN #3: Lipstick?

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: It adds moisturizing substances which keep your lips from drying up. Thus, it is a moisture dispenser.

CITIZEN #2: Would a Slurpee machine also be considered a moisture dispenser?

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: Don't be silly. Slurpee machines are 'calorie' dispensers. They would be subject to a fine, not a tax.

CITIZEN #1: I've heard you're going to cut payments to doctors.

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Damn right. It's high time our nation's greedy physicians start paying us back for their lavish lifestyles. Big cars, big houses, big meals. Let 'em eat bologne like the rest of us.

CITIZEN #2: You've eaten bologne?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Once. And I loved it.

CITIZEN #3: Won't that just chase off doctors?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Look, my friend, these greedy doctors have to be taught a lesson. We're going to really stick it to them for gouging us for so long.

CITIZEN #3: You don't expect to have surgery anytime soon, I take it.

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Hell no. I'm fit as a fiddle.

CITIZEN #4: Would you politicians be subject to this new health plan?

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: Unfortunately, no. We tried to find a way to add ourselves to this marvelous health care plan but it only would have increased the cost and we put our foot down at having to increase it even one dime more.

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: To that end, we also have some very exciting cost-cutting proposals. And we know everyone in this room wants the government to save money.

CITIZEN #1: I'll bite. What kind of cost-cutting proposals?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: These are brilliant. I even came up with a few. For example, instead of hip or knee replacement we'll offer crutches; instead of physical exams and X-rays, we'll offer a soothing walk through any airport security screening machine as a substitute; and we've known for quite some time that most brain surgeries can be avoided with aspirin.

CITIZEN #3: What's next, replacing heart transplants with obituaries?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Ooh, that's good. I'll submit that one the minute I get back to Washington. You've got the spirit.

CITIZEN #4: If the government wants to take over the medical system of this country, why not every other business in America?

CITIZEN #1: Yeah. I'm sure you'll give us the customer care of the Post Office, the repair record of the Park Service, and the efficiency of Amtrak. Oh, and I'm sure you'll continue to take our money like the IRS.

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: Believe me, we're working on it.

CITIZEN #3: Your plan demands that employers provide health insurance or else. Wouldn't companies just stop hiring new workers and giving raises?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: Nonsense. Of course companies will hire new workers. If not, we'll mandate they increase employment every year. That alone will end unemployment forever in this country.

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: And as for you not getting a raise, well, what poppycock. You're worth a raise. I'm worth a raise. In fact, I get a raise every year.

CITIZEN #1: Many people have said this plan is too expensive, takes away from our freedoms, and allows the government the opportunity to take over a sixth of the economy. They say the same goals can be accomplished in other, less expensive and less intrusive, ways. Why aren't these avenues being pursued?

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN: We can't be chasing after rainbows all our lives. Obviously these 'other people' you speak of live in an insulated fantasy world.

CITIZEN #3: But isn't chasing this crazy expensive plan a lot like watching the captain of the Titanic trying to keep the ice machine going as his ship slips into the cold water?

REPRESENTATIVE FLOWMASTER: We've seen the numbers, the data, the costs. We know what we're talking about. (getting up) Now, if you'll excuse us, we have to get back to Washington.

REPRESENTATIVE BULLHORN (also getting up): We have an important vote on puppy health care coming up early tomorrow morning. We can't miss that.

- end of play -