

**Obamacare backfires on the Democrat's technocracy.** By Daniel Henninger, Wall Street Journal, 22 November 2014.

WHO can forget the Obama acceptance speech in 2008 on a football field in Denver, the nominee standing amid Greek columns and scrolling through a long list of goals to 84,000 Democrats? That was the high.

Six years later, the Democrats get the hangover. Barack Obama yesterday announced his presidency's only declaration of war — against the Republicans. After describing how he will redesign the US immigration system on his own authority, he'll fly tomorrow to Las Vegas.

The remaining two years will be irregular warfare, with Obama deploying his weapon of choice, the executive order. This essentially turns the presidency into a cruise missile: the president tells the country what to do, and the country does it.

Before the US political system goes to the mattresses, I'd like to spend a moment discussing Jonathan Gruber, Obamacare and the American people.

Jon Gruber is the now-famous Obamacare designer and explainer-for-hire who said the Affordable Care Act became law because the American people were too stupid to understand what was in it.

Within days, Obama and Democrat house minority leader Nancy Pelosi were throwing Gruber down the memory hole. You bet they were. The Gruber incident poses a direct threat to the Democratic Party.

Gruber's remarks matter not for what they say about the Democratic Party's modus operandi but because of the truths he revealed about the Democratic Party's reason for being. The Gruber threat to the Democrats isn't reputational; it's existential.

The Democrats have believed for decades that if they build it — a healthcare entitlement or any other federal bestowment — the voters will come. That political model is cracking.

Congressional Republicans knew exactly what the act's tax provisions were, and not one of them voted for it in 2010. Today, with the Gruberised PG-version of the ACA entering its second round of sign-ups and its defenders claiming the law is "working as planned", the most recent Gallup Poll reports approval for Obamacare at 37 per cent. On the other side of that poll are the people whose votes just cast out the Democratic Party at every level of government — Congress, governorships and state legislative seats. Who looks stupid now?

On the Left, writers are saying the worst thing about the Gruber filmography is that it gives credibility to conservative stereotypes about the "arrogance" of the technocracy.

That's close but not on target. The problem is not one Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist's arrogance. The problem is that the technocracy itself has become a political problem for the Democratic Party.

For about 80 years, that technocracy has been the life force of the Democratic Party. Now it's a kind of noxious green sludge consuming the party.

Calling itself “the administrative state,” a technocratic army of social scientists, lawyers and bureaucrats has kept the Democratic Party supplied for decades with the policy details behind its promises to the electorate.

Obamacare is a massive law, designed to refashion the entire US healthcare system, just as the massive Dodd-Frank is intended to reshape the whole US financial system. An article this week in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* noted that universities must now comply with “a vast regulatory regime of hundreds of rules from dozens of state and federal agencies with reams of required paperwork”. The newspaper asked, “for what?”. The strangling of higher ed is especially ironic and rich. These are the intellectual foot soldiers of the administrative state, which is even eating its own. Now, with his words alone, the Technocrat-in-Chief will redesign the US immigration system.

Why in 2014 did the Democrats lose so many elections in blue or purple states? Within the tight margin that increasingly decides elections, they are losing support from the non-movement Democrats and independents whose lives are being affected in a bad way by what have become the party’s control-freak dives into healthcare, medical practice, finance, energy, education and now immigration.

The original Democratic idea was at least benign. In the hands of the Obama-Gruber coalition, it has finally degraded into something else. It has become malign, a politics that has to be faked or crammed down.

The best and brightest of the Democratic left will now fashion legal arguments defending national government by executive order. Too late. It looks like the stupid people are wising up.