

Health-care reform survives

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

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In the unlikely event you missed it, the Supreme Court [upheld the individual mandate](#)—a central piece of the 2009 health-care reform law—in a 5-4 decision today. Read the decision [here](#) (pdf) and, if that doesn't keep you busy, follow SCOTUSblog's [live blog](#) for ongoing analysis.

Whatever this decision means for the presidential election, future SCOTUS decisions, or future health-care laws, it's important not to lose sight of its most important effect: millions of people will have health insurance who otherwise likely would not have been able to acquire it. If you believe, as I do, that basic health care is [a right and not a privilege](#), that's unqualified good news. Though less so, as Bryan Cones [points out](#) in agreement with the Catholic bishops (no everyday occurrence, that) if you're an undocumented immigrant.

Garrett Epps [spells out](#) how this decision affirms that Chief Justice Roberts—not Justice Kennedy, [as the conventional wisdom has maintained](#)—defines and controls today's court. Roberts is playing a long game, Epps maintains, the results of which may far outweigh today's win for supporters of universal health care and for the president. Adam Serwer [takes a somewhat rosier view](#), calling Roberts health-care reform's "unlikely savior" and recalling the time when then-Senator Obama explained his vote against Roberts's place on the Court:

"I will be voting against John Roberts' nomination," Obama said. "I do so with considerable reticence. I hope that I am wrong."

It looks like he was.

See also Jeffrey Toobin's [2009 profile of the chief justice](#), via [Longform](#).

Mitt Romney and congressional Republicans [insist](#) they'll redouble their efforts to repeal the law through the political process, and conservative pundits are talking about [how](#). No surprise that they're saying that, but it's not at all clear that they'll follow through with this. With the constitutional question decided, Obama may finally have a real opportunity to start to sway public opinion on health-care reform—by talking relentlessly about the concrete facts of the law. If he can pull this off, it won't take long for establishment Republicans to start changing the subject at every turn.

But for now, Republican Rep. Jack Kingston feels compelled to say that he feels [America is no longer his friend](#). He could always join his ideological compatriots in [seeking redder pastures in Canada](#)—apparently this has become an equal-opportunity threat now, [Canadian Medicare](#) notwithstanding.

For more *intentional* absurdity, check out [#otherSCOTUSpredictions](#).

Finally, I can never take a pass on an opportunity to highlight the fact that old media has no corner on responsible, intelligent journalism—and new media has no corner on buffoonery. This morning, [CNN misreported the SCOTUS decision](#)—a mistake that misled, among others, [President Obama](#). Later [the network reported](#) a "new development": they "did some digging" and found that Roberts subtly tipped his hand during oral arguments back in March.

By "did some digging" CNN appears to mean they found [Brian Beutler's article from March 26](#). Stupid online journalists, always piggybacking on print and broadcast media...