

THE 2017 PROJECT

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MEMORANDUM FROM: 2017 Project Chairman William Kristol and Executive Director Jeffrey H. Anderson

TO: Interested Parties

SUBJECT: Now, Focus on Repeal

The Supreme Court's ruling in *King v. Burwell* is disappointing. But it also provides a welcome moment of clarity: We can finally dispense with the false belief that the Supreme Court will save us from Obamacare. It is perhaps a blessing for the cause of repeal that all eyes will now turn to the presidential candidates and to Congress, whose job it is to repeal Obamacare in full in early 2017. Accountability is no longer divided. The political branches must act.

It is important to note that the Court's decision had no relationship to the question of Obamacare's merits. The case was limited to the question of whether the Obama administration is executing the law as written. The Court says it is. The Court also says, "In a democracy, the power to make the law rests with those chosen by the people." Indeed, it does. And what was true the day after Obamacare's passage is equally true today: the law must be repealed.

The reasons are clear: Obamacare consolidates and centralizes money and power to an unprecedented degree. At its core is an (unfixable) individual mandate that requires, for the first time in all of United States history, that private American citizens must buy a product or service of the federal government's choosing. Its 2,400 pages shift the power over America's health-care decisions from patients and doctors to bureaucrats and politicians. Instead of offering real reform, it raises health costs, diminishes quality, increases federal spending, raids Medicare, balloons the size of government, and undermines Americans' liberty.

It was passed as "comprehensive" legislation. It cannot be fixed. It must be repealed — comprehensively.

The citizenry has opposed Obamacare from the start, and yet President Obama and his congressional allies believed the American people would eventually — dutifully — acquiesce. They have not. According to *Real Clear Politics*, [189 polls](#) have been taken on Obamacare during Obama's second term. One has found it to be popular; 188 have found it to be unpopular. In the one that found it popular (with 47 percent support), more than three

times as many people (31 percent) said it “needs to be repealed in its entirety” as said it “is working well” (9 percent).

Polling that asks about an alternative finds even more support for repeal. [Two polls](#) taken during Obama’s second term have asked about repeal in the context of “a conservative alternative that aims to lower health costs and help people get insurance” — that is, an alternative that deals with costs and coverage. Both polls found that support for repeal trumps opposition to repeal by 60 to 32 percent.

This is not a moment, however, when conservatives’ commitment should be driven by the polls. Even if the American people were to learn to stop worrying and love Obamacare — and a brief, post-*King* Obamacare bounce in the polls is likely — conservatives should still fight for its repeal with everything they have. As Yuval Levin [wrote](#) shortly after Obamacare’s passage, it provides “a health care bridge to nowhere.” It is unsustainable. It will either be repealed, or it will eventually be transformed into a full government monopoly.

The party of limited government and liberty has the most to gain from repeal. If Obamacare is repealed, the entire project of the left will be brought into question. A victory here will beget other victories. But a victory here would be something extraordinary in itself: the greatest domestic-policy win in the history of the conservative movement.

So let the Court step aside. Let us see which presidential candidates, which members of Congress, will seize this moment and lead us to repeal. Obamacare should exist until 2017 and no longer. And a party that fights for that result, a party that brings about repeal and then real reform, will cement its place as the new majority party. A party that fails to fulfill its promise will fracture and recede — and deservedly so. For the Republican Party, therefore, this is a time for choosing.