

POINT

Democrats shut down the government to protect COVID spending, not Obamacare

Let's be clear about what is happening in Washington right now: Democrats just shut down the federal government to force Donald Trump to continue Joe Biden's COVID-era pandemic spending. Republicans should never agree to make that spending permanent. Democrats claim they are trying to preserve Obamacare tax credits. Wrong. They are trying to preserve American Rescue Plan tax credits. The subsidies in question were not part of President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act; they were passed in President Joe Biden's disastrous \$1.9 trillion COVID spending bill, which unleashed the worst inflation in four decades. The American Rescue Plan was a self-inflicted wound on the U.S. economy. Congress passed a \$900 billion economic stimulus package a few weeks before Biden took office, on top of the earlier pandemic relief measures Congress had approved. By the time Biden got to the White House, the economy had already turned the corner and was growing at more than 6 percent.



MARC A. THIESSEN

But Biden wanted credit for the post-COVID recovery. So, in his first major act as president, he rammed through a massive package of supposedly temporary social spending disguised as pandemic relief - including sending millions of Americans stimulus checks, providing the largest child tax credit payments ever and extending ludicrously generous unemployment supplements. The American Rescue Plan also expanded Obamacare subsidies, broadening who qualified for those subsidies by eliminating the income eligibility ceiling that had been set at 400 percent of the federal poverty level. This made millions more Americans eligible for taxpayer subsidies - including households with six-figure incomes - and provided much larger subsidies to previously eligible households compared

with Obamacare rules. Not a single Republican voted for Biden's fiscal monstrosity. Sensible Democrats warned it was an impending disaster. Former Clinton treasury secretary Lawrence H. Summers cautioned in 2021 that it would "set off inflationary pressures of a kind we have not seen in a generation." Obama economic adviser Jason Furman said he didn't know of "any economist that was recommending something [that] size." They were right. Biden's Obamacare expansion, like all his COVID spending, was sold to the American people as a temporary relief measure. The Biden administration said the American Rescue Plan would "build a bridge towards economic recovery." That is why the COVID-enhanced Obamacare subsidies were set to expire on Jan. 1, 2023. Then, Democrats extended the expiration date to Jan. 1, 2026, as part of Biden's Inflation Reduction Act. Remember, both of these bills were passed with Democratic votes alone - which means Democrats are

responsible for setting the deadline for these COVID subsidies to expire. Now they are demanding that Republicans do what Democrats failed to when they had unified control of government and make Biden's COVID health care subsidies permanent - and they have taken the federal government hostage in an attempt to force Republicans to do so. This is a losing fight for Democrats. House Republicans have passed a clean continuing resolution to keep the federal government funded at current spending levels. Senate Democrats are refusing to keep the government open at what are effectively Biden-era spending levels, insisting that Republicans agree to an almost \$400 billion spending increase that Democrats failed to approve in 2021 when they had the votes to do so. That is politically unsustainable. This is not the first time they have tried such a losing gambit. In 2018, Senate Democratic leader Charles E. Schumer shut down the government in an effort to force Trump to extend the expiring

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. It backfired, and Schumer was forced to capitulate without getting anything in return. Shutting down the government in 2025 to extend COVID spending makes even less political sense. The pandemic emergency officially ended in 2023. There is no rationale for extending COVID relief spending two years later. Trump has said that if Schumer ends the shutdown, he is willing to negotiate to reduce health care costs. There might be other ways to make health care more affordable, but extending these Biden-era pandemic subsidies should be off the table. Why would Republicans even consider extending this inflation-inducing vestige of Biden's economic legacy? Instead of negotiating, Trump should make clear that Democrats are not fighting to preserve Obamacare; they are fighting to preserve Bidenomics. And that is precisely what the American people elected him to reverse. Marc Thiesen is a national columnist.

COUNTERPOINT

Budget deceit and illegal cuts at root of shutdown

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS President Donald Trump and his Republican legislative allies are lying that the U.S. government shutdown was caused by congressional Democrats wanting to give federally subsidized health care to undocumented immigrants, something that longstanding law expressly prohibits, not that MAGA cares much about the law anyway. What the Dems are really trying to do is protect already existing health care subsidies that help regular New Yorkers and people around the country afford their health insurance and treatment. So let's tell it like it is: Trump and his MAGA legislators want to take health care away from people, and they are willing to shut down the government and hurt millions of federal workers and the economies of the communities they live and — which is every community in the country — while cutting back on crucial government services to do it.



Plenty of cities and states, including ours, do provide some type of insurance or managed-health plans for undocumented immigrants, but they do it out of their own budgets because they understand that we all end up paying for chronic illnesses and emergency room visits in the end, far more in the long term if we don't have preventative care. But Trump is completely

uninterested in debating any of these policies on the merits, instead resorting to lying about what's happening and attempting to illegally impose policy preferences on everyone else. Like the pre-shutdown attempts to cut appropriated anti-terror funds for New York — which Trump has explicitly said are due to our refusal to go along with his monarchic announcements on "DEI" and

other matters — this is illegal. So was the effort to pull Justice Department grants during his first term. Trump simply doesn't care; he'll move right on ahead until a judge tells him to stop, and then he'll do it again. Last week, the president said he was going to meet with Russ Vought, his OMB director and a primary author of Project 2025 "to determine which of the many Democrat Agencies, most of which are a political SCAM, he recommends to be cut, and whether or not those cuts will be temporary or permanent. I can't believe the Radical Left Democrats gave me this unprecedented opportunity." This wholesale chopping of the government is what Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer feared would happen in March so he agreed to the GOP spending plan in order to avoid it. This time Schumer said no and the Republicans are proclaiming the "Schumer shutdown." But if Trump follows through on his threats and fires thousands, why is

that Schumer's fault? And, of course, the legality of any such firings would be before the federal courts. We can only reiterate what has been clear from the beginning of Trump's second term: the administration has no qualms about doing something unlawful, courts be damned. Our checks and balances require all three of the independent branches to jealously guard their prerogatives and push back on the others. But that's not working now because the GOP legislators are too afraid to buck Trump. This Republican Congress, cowed into submission by the vindictive president, has no backbone to resist the continued usurpation of their Article I authority under the Constitution. In our system, the power of the purse belongs to the legislature, not the executive. And a failure to have a budget plan in place doesn't change that. ©2025 New York Daily News. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

AMERICAN OPINION

We failed to act on DACA when we had the chance

DALLAS MORNING NEWS The news that immigration officials can resume accepting DACA applications marks another turn in a long and exhausting legal battle over the immigration program. After a four-year hiatus, immigrants brought to the U.S. as children may once again be able to apply for permits to live and work in the country. Because of a court ruling, Texas will remain an outlier — blocking work permits for DACA recipients but still recognizing protection from deportation. This leaves Texas recipients unable to work to support themselves, and newcomers

who move here risk losing their permits. Pushing workers into the shadows even though they have temporary permission to stay isn't smart, conservative policy. DACA, or the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, was created by the Obama administration in 2012 to grant temporary protection to some immigrants who were illegally brought to the U.S. as children. Congress had a chance to make those protections permanent, but it didn't. Over the years, the temporary protections have been caught in the crosscurrents of lawsuits. The latest filing in a federal court in Brownsville is another signal of just how fragile this program is.

Every two years, DACA recipients must reapply to renew their protections and work permits, a reminder of how unfinished America's promise remains. According to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, more than half a million immigrants are enrolled in DACA, with Texas home to the second-largest group of recipients after California. The average age of DACA recipients is 31. Many of those who fought for the program in its earliest years are in their 30s or 40s, raising families and building careers. What was once a fight for access to education is now about the ability to provide for a family and keep a household

together. DACA recipients are not just young people trying to go to college. They are parents, taxpayers, homeowners and workers who have deep roots in this nation. Even President Donald Trump, who tried to end the program, has acknowledged the need for a pathway to citizenship for DACA recipients. At one point, there was a bipartisan coalition in Congress that could have pushed legislation across the finish line. In 2018, lawmakers came close with a proposal that would have offered DACA recipients permanent legal status in exchange for tougher border security measures. But politics got in the way. We didn't act when we had a

chance, before the hyperpartisan era we are in now. For too long, we have governed for political gain no matter the cost, compromising this nation's sense of humanity and its economic future in the name of settling scores. There is nothing wise about forcing people, brought here through no fault of their own, to live in legal limbo, tentatively planning for a future that may collapse with the next court ruling. Yet DACA recipients keep the faith. If only we would deliver. ©2025 The Dallas Morning News. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

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CONTACT US

Administration

Korrie Wenzel, publisher/editor

701-780-1103

kwenzel@gfherald.com

Advertising

Staci Lord, advertising director

701-780-1156,

slord@gfherald.com

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