

Could Pajama Onesies Be the Key to Engaging Young Americans?

✘ In my column last week, I explained why I didn't believe it was a smart idea for Republican candidates, in 2014, to present a GOP comprehensive healthcare plan as an alternative to Obamacare. My reasoning was that it would only give the Democrats something to demagogue, and draw some heat off of themselves, much like they did in response to Paul Ryan's proposed entitlement reforms in 2011.

A guy named "Chuck" posted a response in the comment section underneath my column, agreeing with me but also bringing up some additional points – good ones. He said that by taking the stance I did, I was essentially conceding that Republicans are unable to handle the critical onslaught of Democrats to tarnish Republican ideas. In other words, Republican politicians were too inept to defend their own ideas and sway public opinion to their side, even though they have better solutions.

My intention for this week's column was to publicly respond to Chuck and tell him that he is absolutely right. I was going to tell him that in addition to the overwhelming liberal media bias that Republicans constantly have working against them, they're also contending with a Democratic machine that understands the electorate better than they do.

Am I saying that Democrats *relate* to the electorate better than Republicans? No. But they do *understand* it better. They understand how short the average American's attention span has become. They understand how self-centered and unengaged our society largely is. They understand how more and more people today can be played off of adolescent instincts and knee-jerk

emotions such as envy. They understand that crying “racism” in the middle of a serious debate immediately ends thoughtful discussion. They understand that people can be led to believe that false rhetoric is true, simply by repeating it often enough.

For such reasons, the Democratic Party has had far more success connecting with voters – especially younger voters – in recent years, and the Republican Party has yet to figure out how to effectively counter that.

That’s what I was going to say to Chuck.


But then last night, I logged into Twitter and found myself aghast at the Obama administration’s latest attempt to try and get young people to enroll in Obamacare.

Tweeted directly from President Obama’s official Twitter account was a new advertisement featuring the image (pictured above) of a young man holding a warm mug in his hand, while creepily clad in onesie-style pajamas – you know, the kind that are typically reserved for children under the age of three. The caption beside him read, “How do you plan to spend the cold days of December? Wear Pajamas. Drink hot chocolate. Talk about getting health insurance.”

One of the initial replies to the tweet came from Fox News’ Brit Hume who comically wrote, “This is real. OMG.”

My sentiments exactly.

The image has drawn a seemingly endless number of hilarious parody images from conservatives over the past 24 hours – many of which are downright genius. But all laughing aside, it seems to me that the advertisement itself speaks far beyond just an ill-advised political strategy. I think it’s representative of the kind of condescension the Democratic machine views *Young America* with.

They see them as a bunch of dopey, easily-manipulated, overgrown children, and they're not even being subtle anymore in pandering to them as such. This was a key demographic in helping to get Barack Obama – twice. It's now a key demographic in the success of Obamacare. Yet, that demographic is recognized by the political party they've pledged their loyalty to as essentially a generation of hot chocolate-drinking adolescents, wearing kids' pajamas and loafing around in their parents' living rooms. 

As someone who's in his early 40's, I admit that I'm not exactly *in tune* with the mindset of today's twenty-somethings. But I *have* to believe that the *marketing whizzes* behind the pajama ad have helped shed some light on the condescending view the Democratic Party has of this nation's young people. And if I'm right, I would think that the GOP could find a way to draw attention to such patronage, and perhaps use it to put forth a more substantive message, thus swaying young people over to their way of thinking

My fear, however, is that I'm totally wrong. My fear is that the image of a onesie-wearing weirdo (and others like it) might actually resonate with young people, cause them to disregard what's in their own best interests, and compel them to act as instructed.

If that's the case, the GOP might as well throw in the towel right now. The party's over.