

# Did Jonathan Gruber Ever Really Exist?



Who exactly *is* Jonathan Gruber, that mysterious MIT professor that most of us were first introduced to last week through videos of him gloating over the “stupidity” of American voters for not understanding that they were being conned into supporting Obamacare?

He sure seems like an important person. He was, after all, an architect of the Affordable Care Act, the most sweeping healthcare-related law of our time. He was a key player in federal legislation that took control of a sixth of the American economy. The guy has even earned millions of dollars from taxpayers for his government consulting work; \$400,000 for his work on the ACA alone.

Who is this man who has been praised by some of our nation’s top-level leaders?

Senate Majority Leader, Harry Reid called him, “one of the most respected economists in the world.” Former Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, and U.S. Senator Max Baucus cited Gruber’s studies in their public arguments in support of healthcare reform. Our current Secretary of State, John Kerry, called Gruber the Senate Financial Committee’s “guide” on costs related to Obamacare. Former Obama adviser, Steve Rattner, called Gruber the White House’s “guru” on health care, and said the administration viewed him “as an important

figure in helping to put Obamacare together.” Barack Obama himself even lauded Gruber, once admitting that he had stolen healthcare ideas from Gruber’s work.

As highly as these people regarded Gruber, the respect was clearly mutual. In an interview with PBS, Gruber praised the open-mindedness and dedication of President Obama. He explained how, in a meeting between the two in 2009, he sold the president on the necessity of the highly controversial coverage mandate.

Gruber sure seemed to be on top of the world. He’d earned his place in history. He had long dreamed of the kind of national healthcare system that was signed into law with Obamacare, and he had the ears of the most influential decision-makers in the country. It couldn’t have hurt that he made a small fortune in the process. Yet, after a week of conservative media outlets airing multiple videos showing Gruber copping to the administration’s willful deception of the *stupid* American public, *everything* seems to have changed. Once the toast of the country’s *ruling class*, Gruber has now become their *Invisible Man*.

Nancy Pelosi, who had previously touted Gruber’s work, claimed last week that she had never even heard of him, and that he had nothing to do with the ACA.

President Obama distanced himself and his administration from Gruber by calling the professor just “some adviser” who was never a member of his staff. Apparently, paying a consultant \$400,000 – courtesy of the U.S. taxpayer – doesn’t come with any *liability strings* attached, in the eyes of our president. That sure is strange considering that in 2012, President Obama’s re-election campaign proudly called Gruber one of the writers of Obamacare. They sure were thankful for his help back then. Now, he’s been demoted to just “some adviser.”

Universities where Gruber has spoken are reportedly scrubbing

their websites of Gruber's speeches and discussions, seemingly in an attempt to prevent more incriminating footage from turning up on Fox News. Academia is washing its hands of the once esteemed professor – at least until the media attention dies down.

Liberal, *New York* magazine writer Jonathan Chait, who called Gruber “the author of Obamacare” last week, is now feverishly insisting that Gruber just wasn't all that important to the ACA, and should be given no credit for writing the law.

One has to wonder what's next? Is Gruber's publishing company going to claim that he didn't even write that adorable Obamacare comic book of his?

For the past week, the mainstream media has been acting as if they don't know who Jonathan Gruber is either. While Fox News and conservative websites have been covering what the professor has been telling audiences about Obamacare over the past few years, few other outlets have. To them, Gruber just isn't newsworthy anymore – not like the days when he was mentioned regularly in major newspapers that were favorable to the ACA becoming law. Apparently, an admission of a massive lie told by a president to the country just doesn't hold the same weight as it used to.

It all seems very unfair to Professor Gruber. He really is, after all, an important figure in American history. Not only was he an architect of President Obama's signature accomplishment while in office, but he was also a key figure – by his own admission – in one of my generation's biggest political con jobs.

It feels like an injustice not to give him credit where credit is due. Don't you think?

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# Obamacare Architect: Stupid Americans Let Us Pass the Law



Soon after President Obama was elected to a second term in office in 2012, I wrote a column for this website entitled, "How Can Obama Respect an Electorate That Would Re-Elect Him?" The piece presented the argument that the majority of the country, at the time, chose not to factor the president's job performance (during his first term in office) into their decision to support him a second time. My contention was that Barack Obama won because, after four years, voters still liked the *idea* of him as our president. The *reality* of *President* Obama? Well, it just wasn't much of a consideration.

As far as most of the electorate was concerned, the poor state of the country was totally unrelated to the policies and decisions being made by the man sitting in the Oval Office. To those voters, all of the hardships the nation was going through were the product of some curious, faceless anomaly that would eventually pass. In that regard, their support for President Obama was, for all intents and purposes, *unconditional*.

In the column, I asked the question of how Obama could possibly respect those types of people. I wondered how he could possibly bring himself to look out for the best interests of individuals who absolutely refused to hold him accountable for his actions. Now, six years into the Obama presidency, it's become increasingly clear with each passing

day that such respect just doesn't exist, and never has.

The most glaring proof comes in the form of Obamacare. Against the wishes of most Americans, the Affordable Care Act was passed through congress, along partisan lines, using every dirty, legislative trick in the book. It was marketed to the American public using a barrage of often repeated lies, before more lies were later told, claiming that the original lies were never spoken in the first place.

And now, to add insult to injury, a video was released just this week showing one of Obamacare's architects, Jonathan Gruber, declaring that the Affordable Care Act was passed due to the "stupidity of the American voter."

Gruber admitted during a panel discussion last year, at the Annual Health Economists' Conference, that the ACA was *purposely* written in a "tortured way" to make sure the CBO (Congressional Budget Office) did not score the bill's mandate as a tax. As you'll recall, the administration repeatedly claimed that the bill was *not* a tax while selling it to the public, before later arguing that it *was indeed* a tax to the Supreme Court, so it would be deemed constitutional.

"If CBO scored the mandate as taxes, the bill dies," said Gruber to the panel's audience. "OK, so it's written to do that. In terms of risk rated subsidies, if you had a law which said that healthy people are going to pay in – you made explicit healthy people pay in and sick people get money – it would not have passed."

He went on to say, "Lack of transparency is a huge political advantage. And basically, call it the **stupidity of the American voter** or whatever, but basically that was really, really critical for the thing to pass. ... Look, I wish ... we could make it all transparent, but I'd rather have this law than not."

In other words, if the administration had been honest about

what was in the Affordable Care Act, even more Americans would have been against it, and the increased pressure on elected representatives would have prevented it from ever being passed. But since Americans are easily duped, the administration went ahead and blatantly lied about it to get it passed.

Of course, Gruber didn't reveal anything that hasn't already been reported by now. We've learned that the falsehoods surrounding the ACA weren't the result of gross incompetence or innocent misunderstandings. The administration knew exactly what it was doing. They lied – plain and simple. All Gruber did was shelve the insulting spin that has been used by politicians like President Obama, and finally come clean. He admitted, in no uncertain terms, that the pushers of Obamacare had such little regard for the American public that they circumvented them to pursue their agenda.

Perhaps this is now a moot point, with the country finally making their discontent toward President Obama loud and clear in the midterm elections. But there *is* a serious lesson to be learned here: Unfettered allegiance to political leaders will *never* earn voters any respect. Only when there's a likelihood that they'll be held accountable for their actions will politicians revere their constituents.

It's all the more reason why a fair and honest media is vital to a successful democracy.