We Can't Risk Losing to Donald Trump By Believing In Anything

You've heard a lot of big ideas tonight.

But this election shouldn't be about who can run furthest to the left. It should be about who can run furthest away from any firm commitments just in case they upset any upper middle class suburban white voters who I've decided are the only people who could swing this election.

Listen, I'm as progressive as anyone else on this stage. I just think that we don't have to implement progressive policies to make progress.

Our number one priority should be defeating Donald Trump. And we're not going to do it by making crazy, untenable promises we'll never be able to keep. Instead, we should be pragmatic, which is why my plan is to do absolutely nothing different and assume things will change as a result.

Medicare for All might sound like a great idea in theory. I'll even concede that it's a great idea in practice. But you can't just go and kick tens of millions of Americans off of their health insurance simply because you're replacing it with something that's objectively way better. That's like if Apple wanted to give you a brand-new iPhone Xs free of charge, but it meant you had to give up a 2004 Nokia flip phone you currently pay $175 a month for. Why not let people choose between cutting edge technology and the thrill of playing Snake on a 1.5-inch screen?

If there's one thing I know about this country, it's that people love their existing health insurance coverage. That's the hill I have chosen to die on. By the way, I'm dying on a hill in the first place in an effort to relate to people who exist under our current healthcare system. For now.

And let's not forget about the unions. Over the course of so many decades, unions have fought tooth and nail to get employer-sponsored health insurance. So what, now these American workers are gonna elect some socialist, and all they'll have to show for it is the freedom to stop relying on a tenuous job that could disappear at any second for their children's health coverage? That's not the America I know. And something reminding me of the America I know makes it good.

We are facing an existential crisis in climate change. And we need to boldly respond to that crisis with the sort of approach that I take when facing any crisis: tax subsidies and rebates and closing loopholes. Why put out a fire with water when you can form a commission to incentivize small businesses to engage in water-adjacent practices?
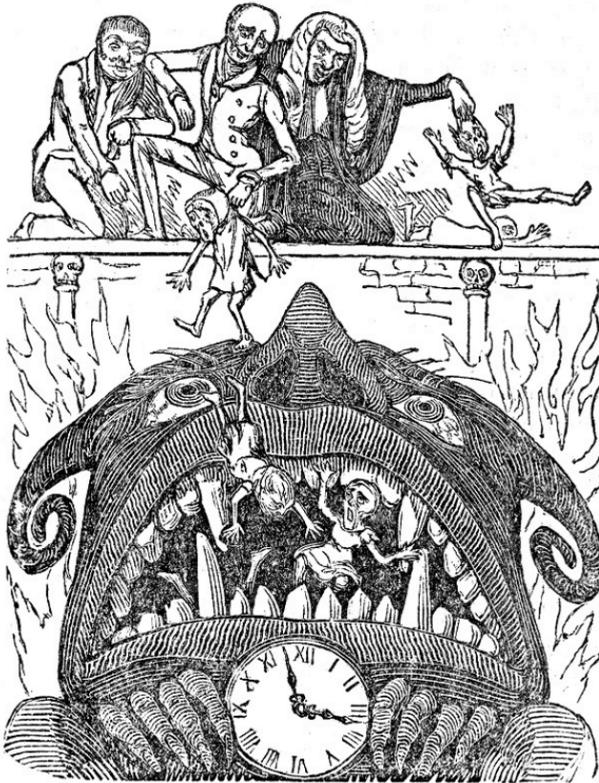
I also have some thoughts about reparations, but I'm going to keep quiet about that until after the South Carolina primary.

I've heard from a lot of voters over the last few months. From the blue-collar pharmaceutical executives who fund my campaign, to the scrappy Wall Street investors who fund my campaign, to the aspirational oil tycoons who fund my campaign. And they all say the same thing — which I will not disclose because those conversations are confidential, and you will never truly know what I assure my most influential donors behind closed doors.

But here's what I told them I would tell you: We cannot defeat Donald Trump if we alienate the people who are almost certainly going to vote for Donald Trump.

The last thing we want is a repeat of 2016, when Hillary Clinton lost. In deciding to run for president, I have spent hours lying awake, racking my brain to determine why that happened. And I've come up with an answer. It wasn't because of Hillary Clinton's moderate policies, or a message relying upon preserving the status quo — that all works great for me. It's because Hillary Clinton wasn't me personally. Meanwhile, I *am* me personally. So you can see that there's a fundamental difference at play.

Some of my opponents believe that the way to win is to appeal to our better angels. But I know just as well as anyone that – as has always been the case — this election will be won by stoking fear in our worst cowards.

Nominate me, and you'll be sending a candidate to the debate stage who will look Donald Trump straight in the eye and say, without hesitation: "the American people demand a president who is superficially a marginal change from the current president."

Unlike some of the other people on this stage, I know I can keep my promises. Because I've promised nothing. And I have a proven record of doing that for my entire career.

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The Single Payer Congresswoman
Is Sick of Democrats' Lies

If you are a Medicare for All supporter, the recent discourse on the topic might have given you such high blood pressure that you've had to turn to our nightmare healthcare industry to fix it. But maybe this will soothe you: **Rep. Pramila Jayapal**, the author of the House Medicare for All bill—which many advocates consider superior to the Senate version introduced by Sanders—published an op-ed in the *Washington Post* today calling out the most common lies told about the policy by both the healthcare industry and prominent Democrats.

Op-eds written by politicians are usually boring at best and infuriating at worst, but Jayapal's is clear, convincing, and thorough. She goes after four separate attacks leveled against Medicare for All: First, that Americans love their private insurance; second, that Americans will pay more because of taxes; third, that unions hate it; and fourth, that it's comparable to Republican efforts to repeal the ACA. She also argues that Democrats should stop using industry talking points to attack the policy, like that it would close hospitals.

Take her criticism of the argument that Americans love their private insurance: First, it is a myth that Americans love private insurance. The vast majority of Americans are deeply frustrated with the health-care system — even if they have private insurance. Opponents and pundits often quote polling that suggests support for Medicare-for-all drops when you tell people that their private insurance plan would go away. But when polls accurately describe Medicare-for-all, and explain that you can keep your doctor or hospital, the majority support increases. People are happy to get rid of private insurance; they just want to know they can keep their doctors and hospitals, even if they switch or lose their jobs. Medicare-for-all would let them do so.

This is true, though I'd also note that in general the polling is far less convincing than pundits make it out to be. A poll is not an election, first of all, and people tend to follow what their parties support. But an NPR poll found that even when you ask people if they support a plan that would replace government insurance with private insurance, support only goes down to 41 percent. That seems well within the range of persuadability. 55 percent of self-described Democratic "moderates" support it, and 64 percent of Democrats overall.

But Democrats do not need a majority of public opinion to support them on every issue to win the election, and they shouldn't seek it. They should seek to **energize a coalition** that has been left behind—the voters that didn't turn out in 2016, for example. The conventional wisdom among centrists that Democrats simply must **chase the Sacred White Moderate** is not only false, it's ideologically motivated. And I'd love to see the media ask the candidates who *oppose* Medicare for All about the poll Jayapal referenced, instead of just asking the ones who support it about the polls framed by Republican arguments against the policy.

Jayapal also noted that the framing of the question around potential tax increases on middle class families is ridiculous without also noting that almost all of families' healthcare costs would evaporate. Americans would no longer pay deductibles, premiums, co-pays, or more than $200 in drug costs per year, and the four percent income tax in Sanders' plan would be implemented progressively. Some helpful nerds have even produced a calculator to help figure out if your costs would go up or down; according to the calculator, a family making the median household income with average health costs would **save $3,798 per year**.

And, regardless, the benefit would be that in exchange for a small tax increase, *every single person would have healthcare*. It's hard to measure the benefits of that in dollars and cents; you could instead measure it in human lives saved, or more hours spent with family instead of fighting with insurance or struggling with illnesses that go untreated without healthcare.

Introduce me to a privately-insured American who right now has no premiums, deductibles, co-pays, dental costs, hearing costs, or vision costs, less than $200 in drug costs, and who also can see any doctor they choose because they have no networks, and I'll give you $100 right now.
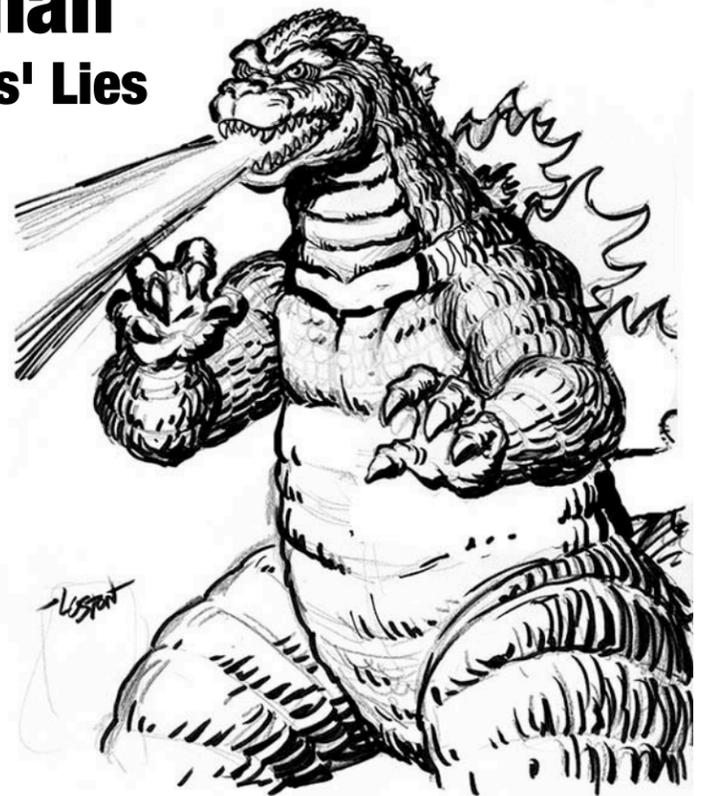
It's also a stunningly clear argument for preserving the class position of those who currently are surviving our system: you frightful poor people can't have better healthcare—or healthcare at all—if there's even a slight chance that *my* care might get worse. If you're going to criticize Medicare for All on the grounds that it might upend your more privileged position in the healthcare system, you should have to do it to the face of a person whose child died because they rationed their insulin, or who had to divorce their Alzheimer's-patient partner in order to access Medicaid. Instead, they get to do it from the safe, comfortable, and powerful post of a national newspaper editorial board. Cool system we got here.

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