

Hudson On Subsidiarity

Michael Sean Winters | Jan. 10, 2011 | Distinctly Catholic

Over at InsideCatholic, Deal Hudson has been wrestling with the principle of subsidiarity, and both of them seem to be losing.

[In his latest post](#) [1], Hudson writes of "the specific threat to the principle of subsidiarity represented by the health-care legislation that expanded the power of the federal government in a way unprecedented in my lifetime."

How many times must it be said: Subsidiarity is a two way street. It requires that social solutions be achieved at the lowest level of social and governmental organization possible as Hudson suggests, but it also demands action by higher levels of social and governmental organization when the lower levels fail to supply important human goods.

Unless I missed it, with the exception of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, there is not a state in the Union that has achieved what Pope Benedict, as recently as last month, said was a fundamental human right, the right to health care.

In the health care debate, Mr. Hudson should chide his Republican friends who are currently seeking to repeal the health care debate. They promise to replace it with some, possible, future arrangements later, but no one should hold their breathe. Why, after all these years, are the proposals to "replace" not on the table? But, if the GOP wanted to truly honor the principle of subsidiarity, they would repeal the Obama reform and replace it with a mandate that every state in the union have universal, or near-universal, health coverage by the time the Obama plan is set to deliver such coverage, in 2014.

Indeed, while I think the President is right to dig in and say "hands off," if the political winds shift and some sort of compromise was required with the repeal forces, he might offer a solution that really does embody subsidiarity, in both directions. Give the states four years to enact their own programs, but if they do not achieve, say, 95% coverage by Jan. 1 2015, all the citizens of that state become eligible to buy into Medicare. Take your pick? A system like Obama's in which the government regulates but does not run the health care system, or a real, robust public option, should the states fail in their moral obligation to provide health care.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.insidecatholic.com/feature/subsidiarity-and-human-dignity.html>