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A Question to Ask in the Months Ahead

By Sarah McIntosh

The months leading up to November will undoubtedly feel long as the American people are bombarded by information on all of the United States presidential candidates. It is easy to fall into a vortex of confusion about the issues and those running for the most coveted position in U.S. politics. Despite the difficulty, however, it is important not to become so disenchanted that we lose sight of what is important.

Americans should be mindful of the opportunities they have in choosing the leader of their country. While it can be easy to become bogged down in the many issues surrounding this campaign, there is a simple question that a person can ask him or herself when evaluating the issues, *"What is the cost of this campaign promise?"*

It can be easy to think that politics is so removed from one's day-to-day life that the issues do not actually affect each of us. This belief, however, could not be further from the truth. Nearly every policy being debated by the candidates will affect every American's life. Too often a candidate offers a "solution" or a promise that sounds good on the surface but that promise's cost goes unseen by the voter. Each and every promise that a candidate makes has a cost.

Health care, for instance, is one of the bigger issues in this year's campaign. To many voters it might sound nice to have candidates promising to provide "every American with health care" but what does this promise of universal health care mean for freedom? And will it truly provide "every American with health care?" What is the cost of having government provide everyone with health insurance?

First, the monetary cost will be crippling. Massachusetts has already started to feel the strain of their recent promise of universal coverage for all individuals in their state. Massachusetts residents have seen plan costs increase while their plan choices have decreased. The insurance has been so costly that the state already had to exempt a large portion of the uninsured from the individual mandate this year.

There is more to "universal health care" than the monetary costs. The cost to freedom will be high too. With the promise of care will come a loss of choices. Individuals will not be able to find plans tailored to their needs and preferences. Instead, everyone will be forced into plans that are both costly and plans that may or may not provide the coverage one desires.

Unfortunately, health care is not the only issue that holds grave implications for individual choice and freedom. Social security and Medicare are unfunded liabilities that are indebting future generations to the current generation. Government spending on an array of programs will lead to "unseen costs." Whenever the government regulates, taxes, and spends there are a variety of unseen costs. Regulations drive up the cost of all consumer items.

As these months pass leading up to the election all Americans should pay attention to what the candidates are offering and each should ask him/herself whether or not the cost is worth that promise.

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