

A Publicity Stunt Is In Order

By Elizabeth Weber Levy

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Call me loony, but congressional Republicans need to conduct an over-the-top, publicity stunt, on Capitol Hill, come September. Why the need for street theater? To capture the attention of the state-run media in a concerted effort to present the public with sensible remedies to what are, essentially, manufactured crises. The August recess allows plenty of time to coordinate the effort.

What would the publicity stunt be? Weather and local codes permitting, it would be a public burning of the-already-passed, pricey [stimulus bill](#), the hideous [energy bill](#) and the even more hideous [health care reform bill](#). A large oil drum would be the fiery receptacle; the prominent venue would be the capitol steps.

The featured speakers, surrounded by their Republican colleagues, save for Senators [Collins](#), [Graham](#), [Lugar](#), [Snowe](#), [Voinovich](#) and (oh, never mind), would be [Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell](#) and [House Minority Leader John Boehner](#). They would open with a ready admission of the obvious: the activity is a publicity stunt and one that is not carbon neutral.

Once the offensive bills are unceremoniously dumped, one by one, into the oil drum and set ablaze, remarks would assert that the stimulus bill simply must be rescinded, period. Then, with alternatives to the current energy and health care reform nightmares plainly in hand, bullet points outlining both pieces of reasonable legislation would be recited clearly and with passion.

[The American Energy Act](#), introduced in June, is wonderfully comprehensive and should be embraced by anyone with a couple of functioning brain cells. The talking points are already written, so explanation during the theatrics and, afterwards, during the Q&A, would be a snap.

[Improving Health Care for All Americans Act](#) is a vast improvement on the existing, massive, ObamaCare bill and [US Representative Steve Scalise](#) (R-LA, 1) gives an excellent [explanation](#) of the practical, short bill all twenty-four pages. Given the length of the document, or the lack thereof, the bill conceivably could be read in its entirety during the publicity stunt.

I have read the Republican bill and noticed a glaring omission, however: a much-needed section on tort reform. Perhaps a separate bill is being contemplated to deal with the practice of defensive medicine. Failing that, an amendment will do.

Considering what is at stake and given worthy alternatives to current legislation are readily available, I think a flamboyant, publicity stunt to put those solutions on display is in order. While Republicans may be The Party of No (often rightly so), they are also The Party of Solutions and America needs to know it.

If adopted, will my zany proposal put congressional Republicans at risk of being ridiculed? Of course it will. So what?