

Krugman: Dollars, Cents and Republican Sadism

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Democrats want to strengthen the social safety net; Republicans want to weaken it. But why?

So begins [this New York Times column](#) by the Nobel Laureate in Economics.

As a careful economist, Krugman provides ample examples to support his assertion that Republicans want to weaken the social safety net. Go to the column to read those.

What I want to share is his conclusions.

He sets up his review of examples, which starts with three selections on health care policy, with this paragraph:

But is it really about the money? No, it's about the cruelty. Over the past few years it has become increasingly clear that the suffering imposed by Republican opposition to safety-net programs isn't a bug, it's a feature. Inflicting pain is the point.

Inflicting pain is the point

Remember that.

It is key.

After going through the health care policy examples, Krugman writes

No, at this point it's clear that G.O.P. politicians simply don't want lower-income families to have access to health care and are actually willing to hurt

their own states' economies to deny them that access.

After all, more than half of those states willing to impose a work requirement as a condition for Medicaid, having accepted Medicaid expansion under ACA, would save none of their own money by imposing that condition, since those kicked off are covered by federal funds.

Krugman answers his own question of what this is about like this:

The answer, surely, is that it isn't about saving money, it's about stigmatizing those who receive government aid, forcing them to jump through hoops to prove their neediness. Again, the pain is the point.

the pain is the point

Krugman devotes the latter portion of his column to a detailed examination of CHIP, before concluding his column like this:

So Republican foot-dragging on CHIP, like opposition to Medicaid expansion and the demand for work requirements, isn't about the money, it's about the cruelty. Making lower-income Americans worse off has become a goal in itself for the modern G.O.P., a goal the party is actually willing to spend money and increase deficits to achieve.

it's about the cruelty

Let me end by repeating those three key points, one after the other:

Inflicting pain is the point

the pain is the point

it's about the cruelty

Go read the column.

Remember those points.

And point that out to anyone with any sense of moral decency for what it means for them to vote Republican, for any Republican.