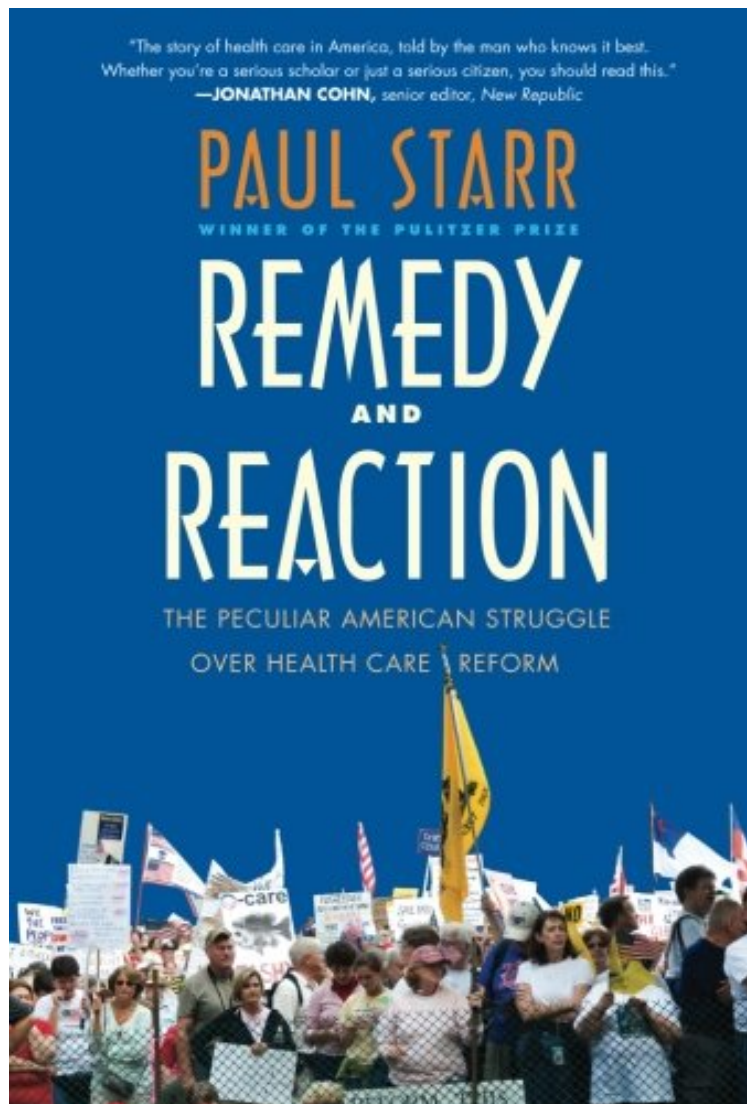


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## Remedy and Reaction: The Peculiar American Struggle over Health Care Reform, Revised Edition

*Paul Starr*

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Remedy and Reaction:  
The Peculiar American Struggle over Health Care Reform, Revised Edition:

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. A Good History of Healthcare in America and the Efforts to

Improve ItBy Lionel S. TaylorThe United States has the most complicated and expensive healthcare system of any modern western industrialized nation. We also have the highest percentage of the population that goes uninsured. Why is this? In his book, Starr explained how we go to this point and why it has been so difficult to fix. The efforts to reform healthcare in this country is nothing new. There have been various efforts and reforms since the New Deal era and other than a few notable exceptions, such as Medicare, Medicaid and prescription drug benefits that target certain segments of the population we have failed to cover everyone. Starr argues that it is these very reforms that doomed the efforts to broaden medical coverage to even larger segments of the population. By covering certain constituencies such as the elderly, children and the very poor while leaving others uncovered the American people were divided into different groups with very different personal interests when it comes to health care. Those that are already covered want to maintain the status quo for fear that their benefits will be impacted while those that are not covered are too few and politically powerless to influence policy while at the same time driving up care for the covered through emergency care. Add to this the various interests from doctors, hospitals, and drug manufacturers and the nature of our legislative process and you get a history of thwarted reform. In addition to giving the history of healthcare in the U.S., Starr does a very good job of explaining The Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and putting it in the context of the previous 70+ years of attempts and failures to reform. Starr does a good job of putting a dense and confusing topic in the proper historical, political, and social context and then explaining it in a way that a layman can understand. While he definitely comes to the issue with a particular perspective (he played a part in President Clinton's healthcare reform efforts) he takes pains to give the perspective of both sides.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A History of American Health Care ReformBy J.L. PopulistPaul Starr lists the many failed attempts at health care reform in American history.He explains why they failed and describes some of the benefits included.The author also gives detailed insight into the political landscape and circumstances that led to failure, particularly in the Nixon and Clinton eras.This is a partisan book but the author, I think, stayed civil while writing about the conservative strategies and figures on that side of the aisle.Very good reading and well written.I came away with a better understanding of the Affordable Care Act and why health care reform has been so hard to achieve.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Necessary History to the Development of ObamacareBy LeePaul Starr wrote "The Social Transformation of American Medicine" in the early 1980s. It was a captivating and complete history of the forces that changed medicine and the medical providers up to 1980. In "Remedy," Starr - who was selected to be a participant in the Clinton medical study (now called Hillary Care) - related the events and challenges that were responsible for the failed attempt to develop a Governmental medical assistance bill in the Clinton administration. It is a fascinating read, and describes the situation well. Although it is clearly biased toward the agenda and political leanings of Hillary and that of her participants, (and thus against the Republicans who he thought were argumentative and unpatriotic), the history is valuable even for us who were not disposed toward the effort at that time. Although it appears that President Obama was more partial to the Nixon attempt (if you can believe it) in Obamacare,the Hillary effort was very instrumental in generating support from those who killed the Hillary bill (namely the insurance industry.) Remedy is a fascinating and necessary read for those who want to understand the genesis of Obamacare.

In no other country has health care served as such a volatile flashpoint of ideological conflict. America has endured a century of rancorous debate on health insurance, and despite the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, the battle is not yet over. This book is a history of how and why the United States became so stubbornly different in health care, presented by an expert with unsurpassed knowledge of the issues..Tracing health-care reform from its beginnings to its current uncertain prospects, Paul Starr argues that the United States ensnared itself in a trap through policies that satisfied enough of the public and so enriched the health-care industry as to make the system difficult to change.He reveals the inside story of the rise and fall of the Clinton health plan in the early 1990sand of the Gingrich counterrevolution that followed. And he explains the curious tale of how Mitt Romney's reforms in Massachusetts became a model for Democrats and then follows both the passage of those reforms under Obama and the explosive reaction they elicited from conservatives. Writing concisely and with an even hand, the author offers exactly what is needed as the debate continuesa penetrating account of how health care became such treacherous terrain in American politics.

"[A] clear, comprehensive, and compelling chronicle of the health care debate. . . . Starr is at the top of his game."Glenn Altschuler, Huffington Post "[An] interesting and engaging account of the many attempts made over the past century to reform care in this country. As daunting, even wonkish, as this may sound, Starr does an excellent job of explaining the different proposals and identifying the reasons why some succeeded where others failed so spectacularly."Dennis Rosen, Boston Globe "Remarkable. . . . There couldn't be a more astute insider to the politics of reform than Starr."Publishers Weekly(starred review) "Remarkable. . . . There couldn't be a more astute insider to the politics of reform than Starr. . . . Starr's history of America's battle over whether health care should be a right is an exacting look at politics and policiesand a challenge to Americans to overcome their fear and distrust in order to protect the sick and vulnerable."Publishers Weekly(starred review) "[Starr's] unsentimental perspective serves him

well in this outstanding volume. "Harold Pollack, Washington Monthly "[A] remarkable chronicle of the hundred-year effort to legislate universal health insurance in the United States. . . ." Bernard Avishai, The Nation "First, [Starr] objectively draws together the threads of myriad voices and special interests in the centurylong American health-care debate and weaves them into a wholly comprehensible pattern. . . . Second, Starr cogently explains the highlights of the recently passed and highly controversial Affordable Care Act. . . . In sum, this self-admitted universal-health-care advocate and seasoned realist leaves readers questioning, as he does, whether Americans can 'summon the elementary decency toward the sick that characterizes other democracies.'" Donna Chavez, Booklist (starred review) "The best summary and political analysis of health care reform I've read. . . . Starr nails every nuance while taking the analysis one level deeper than any other treatment I've read." Austin Frakt, The Incidental Economist "A useful contribution as the country moves forward with the implementation of health-care reform." Kirkus s "[D]elivers an insightful political analysis." Kristen Greencher, The Charlotte Observer "As a work of policy history Remedy and Reaction excels. . . . [Starr] chronicles just how difficult a struggle it has been to make the U.S. healthcare system more equitable and efficient and how far we still have to go." Jonathan Oberlander, Science "[A] remarkable chronicle of the hundred-year effort to legislate universal health insurance in the United States. . . . Nobody with a sense of history that is, nobody who reads Starr's book could doubt how sensible and brave was the president's effort to drive the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 through Congress." Bernard Avishai, The Nation "[A] useful and lucid history of American health reform. . . . Anyone seeking to understand how difficult it will be to implement President Barack Obama's health care reforms will be enlightened by Starr's readable and engrossing narrative. Highly recommended." Jeff Goldsmith, Health Affairs "[C]oncise and beautifully written." Michael Gusmano, Commonwealth "Illuminating. . . . This book provides one of the clearest descriptions and best justifications of the Affordable Care Act published to date. . . . [An] excellent, cogently argued work." Samuel Y. Sessions, Journal of the American Medical Association "Paul Starr has written a fascinating chronicle of America's century-long journey to health reform that is, at once, erudite history, vivid journalism, and authoritative guide to a debate that will continue for decades." Henry J. Aaron, co-author of Using Taxes to Reform Health Care "Three decades ago Paul Starr wrote the definitive history of American medicine. Remedy and Reaction now offers the definitive analysis of American health care reform: its history, nature, and continuing vulnerability." Timothy Jost, co-editor, Transforming American Medicine: A Twenty Year Retrospective "Remedy and Reaction is the story of health care in America, told by the man who knows it best. Whether you're a serious scholar or just a serious citizen, you should read this." Jonathan Cohn, senior editor, The New Republic "Here's the book we've been waiting for: a lucid history of America's struggle over healthcare reform, blending the political, economic, and social pressures that have brought us to where we are, and suggesting where we were headed. With great insight and impeccable writing, Paul Starr explains why that struggle has been particularly bitter and partisan in the United States, why the resulting compromises have left so many people unsatisfied, and why the underlying problems continue to evade us. Brilliant and important." Robert B. Reich, Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy, Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley "Paul Starr, who gave us a magisterial account of the history of American medicine, now has given us the definitive account of the history of the struggle to enact health reform in America. Starr has done more than just study reform; he was a player in efforts to achieve it. Remedy and Reaction is in some ways thus an insider's history, which only enriches the experience of the reader. This book is a lively read, but has depth and insight. From its account of the early experiences in the twentieth century with reform, up through the disappointments in our lifetimes to achieve any comprehensive change, through the enactment of the Affordable Care Act and the story of its uncertain future, Remedy and Reaction is the definitive account of the history of health reform in America." Norman Ornstein, co-author of The Broken Branch: How Congress Is Failing America and How to Get it Back on Track