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Notes from editor (not for publication):

Hi, Nancy — Thanks for the exclusive. Here are a couple of notes.

I've dialed back the name calling a bit. Readers who are aligned with your politics (ours, too) have noticed and don't particularly like it. I generally try to err on the side of not changing or imposing a tone police, but I think the writing works better and the piece is more effective without, and it elevates civility. You're still coming in hot. If I ever get too New York Times-y on you and start warping the truth in the name of civility, that's a different story, and I trust you'll call me out on such edits!

Line 17: I think this is what you really mean, given that there are hollow concessions that were discussed/promised. Of course, let me know if I'm misrepresenting or misunderstanding.

Line 62: From what I've seen, Johnson hasn't refused to hold the vote, only refused to promise to do so. I'm sure you're right, but I'm going to err on the side of precision here. It's bad enough.

Line 84: I'd advise losing the "traitors" clause. I think your ending is powerful without it, and it's a Trump rhetorical trademark that at least to me doesn't ring true.

One note about the phrase "throwing [person/people] under the bus." I just can't bring myself to use it after an 8-year-old girl in my tiny hometown lost her life after being run over by her school bus.

All the best, Jeff

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

Selling out: What Democrats do best

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 Now should have been the time for Democrats to hold
3 firm on their serious demand that health care subsidies —
4 urgently needed by millions of Americas — be extended. Instead,
5 eight senators caved. And for what?

####END SUBHED####

6 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

7 EVEN AMID certainty that a terrible event will occur —
8 when you have seen the players in action too many times before
9 and you know your side does not stand a chance — the actual
10 feeling of the knife sliding in the back is real.

11 Even when we have seen the same show of spinelessness
12 again and again, how can we not feel pain from the weakness
13 and betrayal yet another time?

14 Especially when our side had a small amount of real
15 power after a great elections showings in places as different as
16 New York City and rural Virginia one week ago. Now should have
17 been the time to make a serious demand that health care
18 subsidies — urgently needed by millions of Americas — be
19 extended.

20 Instead, we saw the weakest Democrats in history walk
21 away without any of the health-care subsidies for which the party
22 has been standing firm on principle. But wait — their wealthy
23 friends can fly to the Alps for Thanksgiving, so it was a great deal.

24 * * *

25 DURING THE ENTIRE political debacle — the most
26 agonizing since the narrow election of Trump last year — I've
27 made some major observations:

28 1. No matter how stupid, illegal, far from any past norm,
29 and cruel Trump's irrational demands run, those in power — no
30 matter the party — say, "Yes, sir, we will jump for you — you just
31 tell us how high."

32 2. Those in the formerly August Senate chamber in the
33 distant past worked with one another to create legislation that
34 often did something these current automatons can't grasp:
35 working across the aisle to create that long-out-of-favor concept
36 of compromise. That word has been stricken from the Republican
37 Party's legislative vocabulary.

38 3. In spite of a party that continues to work with the
39 worst corporate shills — e.g., those who brought us the truly
40 awful consultant-driven Harris campaign — there are always a
41 handful of Democrats who have integrity, bravery, and a true
42 willingness to lay it all on the line for the American people,
43 especially those millions who are being punished for the crime of
44 not being billionaires under these fascists.

45 None of those people ever have enough power to prevail
46 in the current legislature. Yet.

47 * * *

48 I HAVE BEEN TRYING to give the sellouts the benefit of the
49 doubt, trying to understand why they would sell out millions of
50 their constituents. And what did they obtain by giving Trump his
51 exact demands and getting exactly nothing meaningful in return?

52 So in real terms, the complete and total sell-out of the
53 entire working class was in the hands of a small minority of
54 Senators. We must ask ourselves what was in it for these eight
55 Senators, who chose Donald Trump's demand to reopen the
56 Senate *for no deal that benefited those in need*.

57 They gave away their only lever to power that might have
58 assured that legislation for health-care subsidies was ever going
59 to pass, thus effectively and intentionally ending the health care
60 that has sustained millions of Americans, and thus signing the
61 death knell for hundreds of rural hospitals.

62 What they got was a weak promise to vote in both
63 chambers in December — with the House speaker, mini-Trump
64 Mike Johnson, already refusing to commit to a vote. And the sell-
65 out Dems knew this at the time.

66 * * *

67 I HAVE HAD the strong feeling that the centrist-,
68 corporate-, consultant-led class of Democrats was always more
69 comfortable with the authoritarianism of Donald Trump than the
70 “Medicare for all” beliefs of Sen. Bernie Sanders’ millions of
71 passionate supporters.

72 And since the election of Zohran Mamdani — the most
73 exciting new figure who is, like Bernie, Democrat-aligned, but
74 identifies as a Democratic Socialist — people like Sen. Chuck
75 Schumer and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand are squirming whenever
76 asked about New York City’s mayor-elect. This terrible sell-out of
77 the basic needs of the American people may be one more clang
78 in the death knell of the Democratic Party.

79 When your priority is getting planes running on time and
80 giving Trump his wish over allowing insurance companies to
81 terminate treatment for millions of children with cancer, adults
82 with heart disease, and the long fights against rampant diseases
83 like Parkinson’s, all in favor of kissing the ring of a demented,
84 deteriorating dictator, your priorities speak for you.

85 You really deserve either a new job, one where human
86 lives are not held in your hands.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

87 **NANCY BRAUS**, a retired independent bookseller, is a
88 longtime activist.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

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