

Topic: Healthcare Reform and State of the Union Addresses

Historical Thinking Skills Assessed: Corroboration

Grade Level: High

National History Standards:

Era 10: Contemporary United States (1968 to the present)

Standard 2: Economic, social, and cultural developments in contemporary United States.

Using the Item: The question assesses students' abilities to corroborate information across two sources to deduce that both speeches argue that healthcare reform will help the American economy.

Background: The sources are excerpted from separate State of the Union speeches by presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, across a time span of sixteen years. While healthcare reform did not materialize under Clinton, Obama and Congress were able to pass the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010.

SOURCE 1

From Bill Clinton's Address to Joint Session of Congress, Feb. 17, 1993

. . . The rising costs and the lack of care are endangering both our economy and our lives. Reducing health care costs will liberate hundreds of billions of dollars for investment and growth and new jobs. Over the long run, reforming health care is essential to reducing our deficit and expanding investment. . .

Source: "Address Before a Joint Session of Congress (February 17, 1993): Bill Clinton." The Miller Center, University of Virginia. Accessed Oct. 8, 2014. <http://millercenter.org/president/clinton/speeches/speech-3435>

SOURCE 2

From Barack Obama's Address to Joint Session of Congress, Feb. 24, 2009

. . . we must also address the crushing cost of health care.

This is a cost that now causes a bankruptcy in America every thirty seconds. By the end of the year, it could cause 1.5 million Americans to lose their homes...And it's one of the largest and fastest-growing parts of our budget.

Given these facts, we can no longer afford to put health care reform on hold. . .

Source: "Remarks of President Barack Obama – As Prepared for Delivery, Address to Joint Session of Congress, Tuesday, February 24th, 2009." The White House. Accessed Oct. 8, 2014. http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-of-President-Barack-Obama-Address-to-Joint-Session-of-Congress

According to both presidents, why was there an urgent need for health care reform?

- A. Rising health care costs are affecting the quality of patient care in the United States.
- B. Health care reform will strengthen the American economy. [answer cue]**
- C. Rising health care costs are leading to bankruptcy and loss of homes.
- D. Small businesses can only thrive if they can provide their employees with health care.

Explanation:

“A” is incorrect because, while Clinton addresses the fact that rising health care costs affect the quality of life, Obama does not make this point. Answer “B” is the best response because both presidents make the connection between healthcare reform and an improved economy. “C” is incorrect because only Obama mentions bankruptcy in the excerpt. There is no mention in either source of a connection to small businesses directly, so “D” is not correct. **[Corroboration]**

[Clean item follows]

HISTORICAL THINKING SKILLS ASSESSMENT

Directions: Read the primary sources below, and circle the response that best answers the question.

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