

An Analysis of Representative Charles Rangel's Response to Senator Ted Cruz

In March 2010, President Obama signed a health reform act called, "The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act," that claims to make preventive care more accessible and affordable for Americans. The act has been commonly referred to as the "ObamaCare." On September 20, 2013, The House of Representatives passed legislation that would fund the government through mid-December, but defund ObamaCare. Four days later, Texan Senator Ted Cruz spoke on behalf of the Republicans in efforts to pass that bill by the Senate to ensure the defunding of ObamaCare. After 21 hours of an attempted filibuster, the bill has been sent back to the House for a re-vote. Although Cruz claims victory, Representative Charles Rangel from the 13th Congressional District in New York, expresses his perspective otherwise on *The Huffington Post* a day later in hopes that Congress will reach a consensus. Congress must pass a bill to fund the government by October 1, 2013 or they fail to raise the ceiling debt and ultimately shut down. Representative Rangel's response managed to reach actual audiences outside the scope of his intended audience, the Congressmen and *The Huffington Post* readers, due to the numerous shares of this story on social media websites. Unfortunately as of October 1, 2013, the government has been officially shut down regardless of his **response**.

While Representative Rangel did not physically give this speech, his situated ethos includes some facts about his reputation that precedes him. Before becoming a Congressman, Representative Rangel received the Purple Heart and Bronze Star award in the 1950 Korean War, obtained a law degree from St. John's University, and served two terms in the New York State Assembly. However in December 2010, the Ethics Committee found Representative Rangel guilty of 11 counts of violating House Ethic

rules and the House approved a sanction of censure against him. The audience may find his trustworthiness questionable due to his lack of ethics, yet they may find that his past accomplishments are trustworthy **enough**. His invented ethos came from the assertive, thoughtful, and critical criticisms he made throughout the response. Criticisms he gave to his colleague's attempted filibuster include how it was "wasting time" and a "circus act." This demonstrates that he is **quick** to be critical of others, making Representative Rangel's credibility questionable. However later in this response he states, "I've been around Congress long enough to know there are issues we may never see eye-to-eye." This increases the level of credibility in his invented ethos because he exemplifies having years of experience in this field and gives reason for readers to believe him.

The amount of charged language and enargeia that Representative Rangel used is extensive. He used words such as "circus act," "wasting time," and "ridiculous" to describe Senator Cruz's actions to be silly and ineffective. The target audience may feel infuriated as taxpaying citizens who want their government to do its **jobs**. With powerful language, he illustrates the enargeia that failing to raise the ceiling debt on time will be "catastrophic for everyone," "disaster for the stock market," and "Americans will suffer," instilling fear in **readers**. The response exemplifies how the stock market will plummet, retirement funds depleted, and citizens without medicine, making readers feel nervous. Representative Rangel states that the Republicans are "holding us hostage," creating an image that the Republicans are hindering the government its goals. Together these two vivid descriptions are a powerful enargeia that stirs anger, fear, and helplessness in readers that gives great compassion to his standpoint, making Republicans look incompetent and Representative Rangel credible, which adds to his invented **ethos**.

During this response, Representative Rangel uses argumentative tools to make his logical appeal compelling. He uses a **contradictory** argument to explain that if Republicans spend Congress's floor time to stop a healthcare law that's already in motion, then they are also not using the time to pass a bill to raise the ceiling debt. This illustrates Representative Rangel's point that Senator Cruz's actions was "wasting time" because Congress "literally cannot afford these **delays**." Representative Rangel later uses a historical example of how 40 other Republicans failed at defunding or repealing ObamaCare. This statistic makes his claim of Senator Cruz's actions valid for his both inductive and antecedent arguments because if 40 other Republicans failed, then Senator Cruz will probably fail **too**. Deductive reasoning was used through an enthymeme with the unstated major premise being that effective Senators use Congress's floor time wisely. The minor premise is that Senator Cruz talked "nonsense" for 21 hours. The conclusion is that Senator Cruz is not an effective **Senator**.

There are two supporting stases. The first is policy; Congress recognizes the urgency to come to a consensus and raise the ceiling debt or there will be a crisis if a government shutdown **occurs**. The second is **value**; Senator Cruz was able to spend hours making his point but that is wrong. Therefore, he urges Senator Cruz and others to come to a consensus to avoid that consequence and not make it any worse than it already has.

In summation, although the government shutdown occurred, Representative Rangel's response is still being shared and debated on social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter. It appears that his ethical, pathetic, and logical appeals in the response on *The Huffington Post* proved to be effective on a broader scale by informing citizens of the repercussions that will and currently are facing from the shutdown.

Work Cited

Rangel, Charles B., Rep. "I Want to Work With Senator Cruz." (2013): n. pag. *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 26 Sept. 2013. Web. 27 Sept. 2013.
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