

Vote **NO** on the health care / insurance reform legislation

I'm asking that you please vote **NO** on the health care / insurance reform legislation! Public opinion polls show a growing majority is opposed to it, and I can't think of a better time to remind you that you were elected to represent the wishes of the people, not your chamber's leadership and / or the President. My suggestion would be that you vote as if your job depends on it, because it very well may. And whatever you do, don't even consider voting yes until you have personally read every single page – even if that delays things by a few weeks. This practice of voting on bills you have not read in their *entirety* is dangerous and a violation of your duty. And we do not have the luxury on this matter for you to rely on what others tell you.

The current health insurance system may need some work, but it's not as "broken" as some people would have us believe. I'd like to point out a few facts that really need some consideration:

- **Keeping Insurance Companies Honest:** It is documented fact that the nation's health insurers pay an average of 86% of every premium dollar collected on claims. So, considering that 14% goes to salaries, business overhead, and marketing, just how much of a cost reduction is possible without complete tort reform and the elimination of mandates? Considering that salaries and business overhead will remain constant (whether a government or private entity), limiting access to care is the only way to achieve that. And how are you going to limit care when the providers still face the potential of malpractice claims? No reputable doctor in their right mind will limit testing or procedures when faced with that exposure.
- **Mandates:** why does the government insist on mandates? Health insurance should be no different than – say – car insurance. You select the specific coverage's you want and pay accordingly. No where is a vehicle owner forced by law to purchase coverage that they have no need for (beyond general liability). The same should apply to health insurance.
- **Paying For This:** all costs of any program you consider must be borne entirely from premium collected based on actuaries prepared by veteran insurance professionals. All accounting gimmicks and taxes must be taken off the table. Let's be honest here: the U.S. government has an extremely poor history of forecasts being correct – take a look at the original forecasting done for Medicare and Social Security and you'll see my point.
- **Ten Years? Lets Talk Eternity:** we keep hearing about what this plan will cost over ten years. It is time you consider what it will cost for generations to come. You must not lose sight of the fact that our budget deficits have and continue to grow exponentially, which means the portion of our federal budget allocated to interest payments will continue to grow, year after year. The ultimate result of that will be fewer dollars

available for normal government functions and entitlements. Our country is at the breaking point; it can not afford to take on one more program that has any potential of revenue shortfalls.

- **Keep Your Own Insurance?** Let's deal with reality here. When the President states "if you like your current insurance, keep it" he is not being entirely honest. Truth is, if you lose your private coverage and want it back, you must select a plan that meets the coverage guidelines established by the government, and even if you don't lose your current private insurance you have to switch to a plan that meets these coverage guidelines after five years (when all private companies will be limited to them).
- **Not Good Enough For Congressional Members:** When asked Friday July 31st, Congressman Waxman admitted that congressional and senate members would not be forced onto the government plan. I find it *very* concerning that it is not good enough for the elite, but is good enough for the common folks – the ones who hire you, by the way. Think about that!
- **HSA's: The Only Good Thing To Happen Lately And You Want To Kill Them.** The elimination of HSA's is a huge mistake for reasons I will explain in the next paragraph.
- **Insured's Will Lose Their Only Advocate:** Citizens lose their ability to purchase insurance from an insurance broker, whose future help is often vital to the insured in resolving matters such as claim issues. One must remember that by law, brokers work for the insured, not the insurance company, and have a fiduciary responsibility to the client. The government will have no such obligation.
- **Considerable Job Losses:** have you considered how many health insurance agents (and their staff) will be put out of work?

So how do you reduce insurance costs and maintain the current system of private insurers? It's actually quite simple: enact complete tort reform, end mandates, and go back to the old indemnity-style PPO plans, where the insured has a deductible of 250, 500, or 1000, then is responsible for 20% of all charges after the deductible is met until they've reached their stop loss (aka maximum annual out of pocket) of – say – 5,000.00. The bottom line is if people have their money on the line, they will be far more cautious of how they utilize health care, and that will also help to significantly reduce premiums. That is exactly why HSA's are a win-win for everyone involved. And by severely limiting (if not outright elimination of) malpractice claims, the providers will feel far more comfortable in only suggesting and prescribing tests, procedures, and prescription drugs that are really necessary.

This policy of low office visit co-pays and little to no cost for other services began with the introduction of HMO's and has significantly increased the cost of health insurance. It has turned insurance into a usage plan, and if the government plan continues that practice, the taxpayer will be responsible for a never-ending shortfall.

So now we're down to the 16 percent of American's without health insurance, and after you remove those who don't want it or consider expensive cars, flat-panel TV's, and entertainment to be higher on their (financial) priority list, or those who are residing here without permission, you are probably down to eight percent of the American public.

Start working on a health care bill that addresses the needs of those people, beginning with insurance reform as I outlined above, and allow the rest of us to continue with the private marketplace.

If you fix what is broken all American's will applaud you; If you destroy what is good, all American's will fault you. Slow down and give this issue some real careful thought. This is serious business and not something that can be undone when it proves to be a failure.

As General Powell said to President Bush prior to the Iraqi invasion, "you break it, you own it". Somehow I still have enough faith in you that you'll recognize this as something you don't want to own!

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