

Repeal and Replace

Over the coming weeks, months, and years, every American will be impacted by the government-run health care bill that Congressional Democrats and President Obama muscled through Congress and onto the books. The legislation's increased taxes and government mandates are the reason every single one of my Republican colleagues and I voted against it, as well as 34 Democrats. At a time when a record number of Americans are unemployed, this Washington takeover will further harm the American economy and kill more private sector jobs.

Allow me to provide you with some information as to why I view this legislation as so harmful to our nation:

Almost immediately, Americans and small businesses will be hit with \$569 billion in new taxes, which is the largest tax increase in our nation's history. Americans who already have private health insurance will have their plans taxed under the new Washington-run health care system. Those who do not have health insurance and do not want it will also be forced to pay a tax.

The largest single tax hike in the bill – \$210 billion – results from an increase in the Medicare payroll tax on wages for job creators and small businesses, and a new surtax on net investment income. The threshold amounts for these surtaxes are not indexed for inflation, meaning that although the taxes are aimed at wealthy individuals today, they will reach increasing numbers of middle-income taxpayers over time.

Furthermore, some small businesses will be hit with a \$2,000 fine for each full-time employee who is not offered insurance. These engines of job creation will be forced to downsize if they are unable to provide coverage that complies with rules set forth by a newly appointed health czar. And to make matters worse, an army of more than 16,000 IRS auditors will be hired to enforce these mandates.

In addition, the new government-run health care legislation creates 159 new government boards, bureaucracies, and programs – including a new entitlement program – that will impact the quality of health care for every American. These layers of bureaucratic red tape will effectively place government employees between you and your doctor.

Although both Congressional Democrats and the Obama administration claim their new health care system will not increase the deficit and will lower costs, nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, the legislation spends \$2.6 trillion over the next decade and is estimated to add \$59 billion to an already staggering \$1.5 trillion budget deficit, once the 'doc-fix' is factored in. Also, under the Democrats' enacted legislation, health insurance premiums are estimated to actually increase by as much as 10 to 13 percent.

In the end, Americans will be left with a monstrous debt, increased taxes, fewer choices, and a bigger government. So where do we go from here?

I believe firmly we need to repeal government-run health care and start over with common sense market solutions to lower the cost of insurance. Specifically, I have cosponsored legislation to repeal the bill and replace it with the Empowering Patients First Act.

The Empowering Patients First Act builds upon what works and fixes what is broken. It increases choices and portability, establishes anti-fraud measures, enacts medical liability reform, and expands high-risk pools and reinsurance programs to guarantee access to affordable care for those with pre-existing conditions. What is more, this alternative plan would not add to the monstrous debt Washington has placed on our children and grandchildren. In fact, it would lower the deficit by \$68 billion over ten years.

All in all, a government-run health care system is wrong for America. We must repeal this bill and bring true reform to our nation's health care system.

GARY G. MILLER
Member of Congress