

April 23, 2013

Dear Leader Cantor and Congressman Pitts,

We want to thank you for drafting, and offering to call up in the House, a bill that allows Members to choose between continuing to have part of the so-called Affordable Care Act fund lobbyists, activist organizations, and ad campaigns to raise taxes and restrict freedom, as it is presently doing, or redirecting some of those funds to make insurance more affordable for Americans with pre-existing conditions, while reducing overall spending. That's the decision the House will face when it considers your H.R. 1549, the Helping Sick Americans Now Act. It should be an easy choice.

We fully support repealing – and short of that fully defunding – ObamaCare, and in a perfect world that is what we'd have already done and would do again tomorrow. Collectively, we represent millions of Americans who recognize the harm ObamaCare will do to medical choice, access, and affordability, and know there are far better ways to improve health care. As long as we face the reality of this President and a Senate controlled by Democrats, we recognize that repeal will take time. We work every day to build awareness of the false promises and real harms of this dreadful law, and support for defunding, de-authorizing and ultimately repealing it. As we work toward repeal, we want to ensure that we protect innocent Americans from the worst aspects of the law, and mitigate the law's damage to our country.

That's why we support the Helping Sick Americans Now Act. It would redirect money that's currently being used to implement some of the worst aspects of the existing law to the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan, or PCIP, a federal high-risk pool insurance program that helps provide coverage for those with pre-existing conditions, but which the Administration closed to new enrollees earlier this year due to funding constraints. The bill takes \$4 billion from an Obamacare slush fund and reallocates part of it to helping sick people the President has turned his back on. The remainder, about \$1 billion, goes to deficit reduction. To be clear: this bill defunds Obamacare.

The American people need to hear about the failure and hypocrisy of this Administration, and the Helping Sick Americans Now Act will help to get this message out. First, the Administration sold ObamaCare as a vehicle for helping those with pre-existing conditions, but knowingly poorly designed and underfunded the primary program serving that most vulnerable group. Once the consequences of that under-funding became clear, instead of reallocating existing slush funds to support it, they shut the door to the program on an estimated 40,000 sick Americans, causing real hardship for many Americans who currently have no better alternatives.

This didn't have to happen. Secretary Kathleen Sebelius has the authority under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) to transfer money from the so-called Prevention and Public Health Fund ("Prevention Fund," or "Slush Fund") to the PCIP. But she has knowingly refused to take this simple, compassionate step, because politics takes preference over the people this Administration no longer needs to pretend to care about. H.R. 1549 would therefore *require* HHS to transfer approximately \$4 billion in FY 2013-2016 funding from the Prevention and Public Health Fund to PCIP. This would allow CMS to enroll sick Americans who have been denied coverage because of the Administration's decision.

In addition to prioritizing sick Americans, H.R. 1549 would also eliminate four years of funding from the Prevention and Public Health Fund, one of ObamaCare's worst programs, which is rife with waste and abuse. For example, the "Prevention" fund has financed pet neutering campaigns, bike/park signs, and gardening, and more disturbingly lobbying campaign – in some cases directly funding lobbyists in violations of federal law – to enact fast food construction moratoriums and soda taxes (included polling to test messages for higher soda taxes).

Reallocating the Prevention and Public Health Fund resources would at least be a more constructive use of funds rather than pouring more money down into the bottomless maw of an unworkable bill. If this funding is not reallocated to PCIP then it will continue to go to implementing ObamaCare. In fact, the Administration has tapped \$54 million from the Prevention Fund to pay individuals and community groups to sign people up for ObamaCare exchanges (and simultaneously check if they are registered to vote). Just last week, the Administration announced that it plans to use \$304 million for enrollment and advertising campaigns for Obamacare. The Prevention Fund is one of the last sources the Administration has to use for 2014 implementation of its \$1 trillion “train wreck” of an exchange program.

H.R. 1549 would also make the PCIP function better by eliminating the rule that requires already sick individuals to go without coverage for six months in order to gain eligibility for the program. While PCIP could be improved further, and should in fact be replaced with smarter programs, it makes sense to prioritize funding for vulnerable Americans over slush funds for the remainder of 2013. Preliminary estimates also show that H.R. 1549 will reduce the deficit by approximately \$1 billion.

This bill represents the first opportunity that our congressional allies and we have had, since the health care law's enactment three years ago, to show what we are for – and whom we are for – and not just what we are against.

Of all the bills considered in the House to date, to repeal, defund, or dismantle ObamaCare, this bill is the first to point towards the kinds of market-oriented reforms that most conservatives would replace ObamaCare with. If enacted, the bill would help to slow down the law's implementation, a significant achievement. The simple act of debating the bill will give conservatives the opportunity to highlight all that's wrong with ObamaCare, and with the Administration's misuse of funds and callous attitude toward those with pre-existing conditions.

The bill is a win-win for conservatives and the American people. The law's implementation is already chaotic – in the words of Senator Baucus, a “train wreck.” This bill will make it harder for the Administration's engineers to get that destructive train back on track.

Even after this bill has been debated and sent to the Senate, we will continue to fight for full repeal – this year. Three years of ObamaCare is enough. We must end this law before January 1st, when it is scheduled to take full effect. We appreciate your leadership on this important issue, and look forward to working with you as we continue toward our shared mission of repealing ObamaCare – while creating a better health care system that benefits all Americans – this year.

Sincerely,

Heather Higgins,
Independent Women's Voice

Phil Kerpen
American Commitment

Dean Clancy
Freedom Works

Additional Signatories (to date):

Jim Backlin, Christian Coalition of America
Jim Capretta
Ryan Ellis, Americans for Tax Reform
Colin Hanna, Let Freedom Ring
Ken Hoagland, Restore America's Voice Foundation
Dee Hodges, Maryland Taxpayers Association

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Amy Ridenour, National Center for Public Policy Research
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