



## **Gruber: ObamaCare quote in court case 'taken out of context'**

**By Sarah Ferris**

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The embattled ObamaCare architect Jonathan Gruber made a rare public appearance Wednesday to say that his controversial remarks about healthcare subsidies have been taken out of context.

Gruber's remarks had become a key part of the GOP-led Supreme Court case against ObamaCare, which could erase subsidies in 34 states that use the federal exchange.

The MIT economist told an audience in 2012, "if you're a state and you don't set up an exchange, that means your citizens don't get their tax credits." Conservative lawyers said his remarks proved their argument that tax credits are only legal in exchanges that were "established by the state," as parts of the law say.

Gruber said Wednesday that his words had been twisted by the plaintiffs.

"I gave a quote that's been taken out of context. I've disavowed it," Gruber told a healthcare summit hosted by SunLife Financial.

Gruber's name appears six times in the plaintiff's brief for the case, though he was not mentioned during the hourlong oral arguments at the Supreme Court last month. The ruling is expected in late June.

When asked how he thought the court could rule, Gruber replied, "I have no idea."

"I'm not a political scientist and I've gotten in trouble for pretending I'm one," he added.

He was asked if Congress or state governments could take steps to limit the fallout, which he said was "unlikely."

"I don't know what happens. It's hard to imagine," he said.

The longtime policy adviser — who also helped Mitt Romney create his healthcare plan in Massachusetts — also delivered a defense of the federal law.

He said much of the remaining political opposition to ObamaCare is rooted in misunderstanding.

“I think there’s a continued enormous lack of understanding about the law,” Gruber said.

Gruber first came under fire last fall after videos surfaced in which he attributed the passage of ObamaCare to the “stupidity of the American voter.” He later apologized for the remarks.

In a warning to the Supreme Court, Gruber said that erasing subsidies in three-quarters of states would cause “great upheaval” nationwide.

“You’re going to see an enormous collapse in this market, which is, as I said, growing quite robustly right now,” Gruber said, sticking to the administration’s talking points on the case.

Wednesday's panel also featured Michael Cannon, one of the architects of the *King v. Burwell* case and a longtime opponent of ObamaCare.

Cannon told the panel that members of Congress and the administration were aware of the ObamaCare rule that required states to create their own exchanges in order to qualify for subsidies, but focused on more of the hot-button issues at the time.

“No one focused on it because everyone was concerned about abortion ... no one thought it would become the final bill,” Cannon said.

Cannon, who helped craft the conservative’s legal challenge to ObamaCare, said he was certain that Congress had intended to limit subsidies to state exchanges. But he acknowledged that the court could still decide to uphold the subsidies to side with the federal government.

“The challengers’ odds of winning are about 20 percent,” he said. “Whenever you take on the government, you’re betting against the casino.”