

Upton investigates Obamacare advertising campaign, stimulus funding

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Top GOP health-care official Rep. Fred Upton is taking a close look at the Obama administration's advertising blitz for Obamacare, giving the president two weeks to provide all documents related to the P.R. push that included spots by aging TV star Andy Griffith.

"Particularly when it comes to health care, we've seen the creation of veritable government slush funds with no accountability or transparency," said Upton in a written statement.

At issue is \$1 billion provided to the Department on Health and Human Services (HHS) for Obamacare implementation.

Some of the money was spent on advertisements to "educate" the public. GOP critics have called the efforts "propaganda," especially because HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said last August that the administration had a "lot of reeducation to do."

"Please provide ... all documents, including e-mail communications between HHS officials or any outside individual or group relating to advertisements, education or any other efforts to communicate any effects of" the health-care law, a Jan. 31 letter from Upton and two other key Republicans says, providing a deadline of Feb. 14.

Cato Institute health policy expert Michael Cannon told The Daily Caller the Obamacare advertising campaign was "clearly shameless propaganda," mentioning the Griffith ads and a mail campaign to seniors.

"If they send those documents to Congress, we'll be able to see just how much they've been shading the truth to gain public support for Obamacare," Cannon said. "I expect that exchanges about the content of these mailings and ads will be the most revealing because they'll show how the administration arrived at their decision to mislead seniors the way they did."

The documents will detail how the Obama administration went conceived and procured advertising campaigns ranging from television ads to Google adwords purchases targeting searches for "Obamacare."

Another GOP letter sent today asks for documents relating to \$1.1 billion in stimulus funds it received to "support comparative effectiveness research."

HHS faces another major document deadline Thursday from an Upton request. That request relates to how HHS decided which companies it waived early requirements of Obamacare for. Labor unions received about 40 percent of the more than 700 waivers HHS granted.

Jessica Santillo, an HHS spokeswoman, said "We have received the letters and look forward to responding to the committee's requests."

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