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Critics tee off on Obama's health care law as first anniversary passes

By [John Rossomando](#) - The Daily Caller 5:40 PM 03/15/2011



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While many Americans were focusing on "March Madness," a panel of members of Congress and [health care](#) activists had another kind of "March Madness" in mind Monday night— the first anniversary of the passage of President Obama's contentious health care law.

The panel was headlined by Oklahoma Republican Sen. Tom Coburn and Republican Reps. Tom Price of Georgia, Michele Bachmann of Minnesota, Steve King of Iowa and Michael Burgess of Texas. The lawmakers were also joined by 60 Plus Chairman Jim Martin, Virginia GOP Senate candidate Jamie Radtke and Cato Institute health care expert Michael Cannon, among others, to raise awareness of the implications of the law's ongoing implementation.

Let Freedom Ring, the Galen Foundation and Independent Women's Voice co-sponsored the basketball-themed event held at the Capitol's visitor's center.

"Real madness— March Madness— is America swallowing this large pickle of a health care bill and the indigestion that's going to come for the next two or three years," Coburn said.

A large part of what the speakers call madness stems from the approximately \$105 billion that the 111th [Congress](#) hid in the law to automatically appropriate funds for its implementation until 2019. This provision did not come up for debate in either the House or the Senate and was only recently discovered.

This provision has been largely absent from the current budget debate over House Republican plans to cut \$61 billion from the federal budget.

"Did it just escape Nancy Pelosi's memory to tell those of us in the House?" Bachmann asked. "This is a bad insult, petty insult to every [senator](#) and every House member who voted on this bill— to be denied material knowledge of this bill."

"In the private sector, if you have a contract between two parties and you fail to disclose a material term, the contract is void and without an issue— void from the beginning," she continued.

The health care law should be void because members of Congress and the people were denied this piece of information, according to Bachmann.

The Obama administration received over \$18 billion in 2010 alone to implement the law and a further \$4.95 billion has been self-appropriated for 2011, according to a Congressional Research Service report that King's office studied.

"That's a pretty sweet down payment to implement this bill, and we know that over 6,000 pages of rules and regulations have been written to this monstrosity of a bill," Bachmann said.

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Although the House of Representatives overwhelmingly voted to repeal the health care law last month, the self-funding mechanism governing its implementation remained untouched.

King tried and failed last month to pass an amendment, modeled on a continuing resolution that ended Vietnam War funding in 1974, that would have "shutoff all funding to implement or enforce Obamacare". But he was ruled out of order when he tried tacking it onto HR 1 because it did not conform to the House rule governing the bill.

"The members of Congress take an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States, not to uphold some rule that no one can point their finger to and show me the language of at this point," King said.

The congressman told The Daily Caller after the press conference he suspects the GOP leadership was involved with his effort to get his amendment passed because they are not completely aware of how the health care law's self-appropriating function works.

"If something happens like a [government](#) shutdown— government could shutdown and everything could come to a screeching halt, but Obama's little elves would be implementing Obamacare until they burn through that \$23.6 billion," King said.

King and Bachmann have vowed to oppose every continuing resolution that does not include a provision defunding the health care law. They were joined Tuesday by 52 other Republicans in opposing the short-term, three-week continuing resolution, which lacked their provision.

"The numbers of people who are going to vote no on this are going to grow," King said. "There were only six of us two weeks ago.

"Is there going to be a fight against the president and Harry Reid on this, and if the answer is 'Yes', we need to make the case for that."

Time is running out on the clock for Republicans to defund the health care law, according to King, who plans to keep pressing the issue. The states are also busy moving ahead with the creation of the health insurance exchanges mandated by the law.

FreedomProject.org, a [political](#) action committee tied to House Speaker John Boehner, announced Tuesday in a press release that it supports cutting off the automatic funding, which it calls "a slush fund."

Panelists also took shots at the over 1,000 waivers that have been granted from the health care law's stipulations, with the lion's share of the waivers going to unions and others with connections to the Obama administration.

"It's interesting to me that less than 16 percent of the people of this country belong to a union, but 58 percent of those receiving the early retirement waivers, or about \$5 billion, happen to be union plans," Coburn said.

At the same time, states are having difficulty obtaining needed waivers to effectively manage their Medicaid programs.

Provisions such as the individual mandate, interference with the doctor-patient relationship and the perceived favoritism accorded to unions and others continue to make the law unpopular— with 62 percent of all Americans favoring its repeal according to a recent [Rasmussen poll](#).

The House Republican [leadership](#) could not be reached for comment.

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