

CBO, Pelosi unclear on Obamacare's Medicaid glitch costs

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As details about the new-found Obamacare glitch, that allows for more than 3 million middle-class Americans to qualify Medicaid surface, the Obama administration and key members of Congress are mum on several points.

Was it intentional? According to the Associated Press, it was a negative result of a “well-meaning effort.” Obama administration officials and senior congressional Democrats, including House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi haven’t answered this question, and Pelosi’s office hasn’t responded to requests from The Daily Caller seeking comment.

“What I want to know is: did the CBO know about this? Did they include this spending in their original score of the law?” said Michael Cannon, health policy expert at the Cato Institute, in an email. “Or would this spending add even more to the cost of the law?”

The CBO performed a cost analysis of the Affordable Care Act, and it contends it did take the costs of this new-found glitch into consideration.

“We have been asked by a number of people whether, in its estimate of Medicaid enrollment under PPACA, CBO took into account the change made by that law in the income definition used to determine eligibility for Medicaid,” the CBO said in a statement to the House Budget Committee. “That income definition excludes the portion of Social Security income that is not taxable.

“The short answer is ‘yes,’” the statement read. “CBO took that new income definition into account in its estimate of Medicaid enrollment and costs. We have not separately estimated the number of early retirees who would be eligible under that income definition.” **(Glitch in Obamacare could add 3 million to Medicaid roll)**

Though the CBO says the “short answer” is “yes” when it comes to whether or not it included these 3 million people soon-to-be-eligible for Medicaid in its Obamacare cost

analysis, some questions are still unanswered. Where did they get the information on how to make their analysis, and did it come from the people who wrote the law?

Also, if this was an intentionally-added provision, it would appear to be a part of a concerted effort to get millions of middle-class Americans on the government Medicaid dole. If it wasn't intentional, then the next question is: are Democrats willing to repeal that part of the law?

“Assuming that Obamacare’s authors didn’t mean to include this middle-class Medicaid provision, one can imagine Republicans and Democrats agreeing to repeal this part of the law,” Cannon said. “But I expect House Republicans would use this embarrassing episode as leverage to repeal even more of the law. If so, the president and his party will be on the defensive as they try to explain why they want to increase the national debt with middle-class Medicaid.”

Rep. Cliff Stearns, Florida Republican and chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee’s Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, told TheDC that this new revelation is another example of why Obamacare is flawed.

“It appears that this provision could move up to 3 million more people into Medicaid, including those making up to four times the federal poverty level,” Stearns said. “It is clearly another example of a massive increase in government that we cannot afford. Even though Obamacare was enacted over a year ago, we are still learning what was in the bill.”

Cannon echoed Stearns’s feelings that this new-found revelation shows yet again how Obamacare has negative consequences.

“When you ram a 2,000-page bill through Congress without due consideration, this is what you get: a law that accidentally kicks members of Congress out of their own health plans, inadvertently offers Medicaid to millions of middle-class retirees, and where consumers are clamoring for waivers to protect them from the law’s supposed consumer protections,” Cannon said.

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