

The Daily Record

Making Obamacare Even Worse

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May 9, 2017

Democrats and the media are having such conniptions about the American Health Care Act, you'd think Republicans were really about to repeal Obamacare.

They're not.

Rather than do what their supporters sent them to Washington to do — repeal Obamacare and replace it with freemarket reforms — House Republicans passed a bill that will increase health-insurance premiums, make health insurance worse for the sick, and ensure that Republicans rather than the real cause (Obamacare) will take the blame.

Let's start with where this whole mess started: March 23, 2010, when President Barack Obama signed Obamacare into law.

On that day, and every one of the 2,422 days between then and the 2016 election, Republicans consistently and unequivocally vowed to repeal and replace Obamacare.

Seventy-six percent of Republicans and 80 percent of Trump voters want Congress to repeal and replace Obamacare.

Despite that mandate, House Republicans emerged with a bill that does not repeal the core provisions of Obamacare, and therefore cannot begin to repair the damage those provisions are causing.

Obamacare's core provisions are the "community rating" price controls and other regulations that (supposedly) end discrimination against patients with preexisting conditions.

How badly do these government price controls fail at that task?

Community rating is the reason former president Bill Clinton called Obamacare "the craziest thing in the world" where Americans "wind up with their premiums doubled and their coverage cut in half."

Community rating is why women age 55 to 64 have seen the highest premium increases under Obamacare. It is the principal reason Obamacare has caused overall premiums to double in just four years.

Community rating literally penalizes quality coverage for the sick, to the point where Harvard economists found patients with multiple sclerosis and other high-cost conditions "cannot be adequately insured" under Obamacare.

Community rating has driven every last insurer from the Exchange in east Tennessee, leaving 43,000 Americans with no coverage after December. It may soon do the same in Iowa, and another 1,000 counties that have only one insurer remaining in the Exchange.

Why? Because community rating forces insurance companies to cover the sick below cost, which isn't sustainable. The only solution Obamacare supporters offer is to keep throwing more money at the problem, which also isn't sustainable.

The AHCA does not repeal community rating. Therefore, the AHCA does not repeal Obamacare. In fact, Republicans are modifying Obamacare's community-rating price controls and other regulations in ways that will accelerate Obamacare's race to the bottom.

Why?

Republicans are salivating at the bill's \$1 trillion dollars of tax cuts and cuts to government spending. So would I, if I thought those cuts would last.

The AHCA's Medicaid cuts are also unlikely to stick. The AHCA's "reforms" create incentives for states to expand Medicaid to able-bodied adults while cutting benefits for the truly vulnerable.

Republicans are not repealing Obamacare. They are making it worse, and offering to take the blame for its failures, which will ultimately cement that law in place.

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