



Republicans push vote on delaying ObamaCare individual mandate

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Congressional Republicans are pushing for a vote on delaying the ObamaCare requirement that individuals buy health insurance or pay a hefty fine.

The move comes in response to the administration's abrupt decision to delay a similar requirement for businesses.

Last week, the administration delayed until 2015 a requirement that businesses with 50 or more workers provide health insurance for their employees. While Republicans pointed to the delay as a sign of the broader problems with the law, they also questioned whether the delay would put an even greater burden on families -- who would still be required to obtain health insurance on their own or face a fine.

House Speaker John Boehner and other top GOP leaders this week urged the administration to delay the individual mandate as well. Separately, lawmakers are planning for a possible vote on the issue.

A House Republican leadership aide told Fox News that "there is a lot of enthusiasm among House Republicans for voting to give individuals and families the same protection from this awful law."

On the Senate side, Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., has offered an amendment to an appropriations bill that would delay the individual mandate for the next fiscal year. The amendment prohibits federal funds from being used to enforce the mandate.

House lawmakers, meanwhile, scrutinized the selective delay during a committee hearing on Wednesday. They invited a host of analysts who criticized both insurance coverage requirements. Republican lawmakers, one after another, also held up the delay as a sign of problems to come.

"I don't know how you can conclude that this is not a total fiasco," Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., said. Obama administration officials, as well as Democratic lawmakers, have defended the decision to delay only the employer mandate. They described it as a sign of flexibility on the administration's part, responding to concerns from business groups about the reporting requirements.

As the administration moves to simplify the rules, officials said, they would, in turn, give businesses more time to comply.

"We have heard concerns about the complexity of the requirements and the need for more time to implement them effectively," Mark J. Mazur, the assistant secretary for Tax Policy at the Department of the Treasury, said last week on the Treasury blog.

Other lawmakers and analysts, though, raised the concern that delaying only the employer mandate would put pressure on everyone else. Michael Tanner, a senior fellow with the Cato Institute, penned a column that ran in the Daily Caller noting that the delay could increase the burden on individuals and taxpayers.

"By postponing the employer mandate ... the administration has shifted costs from employers to workers and/or taxpayers," he wrote. "That hardly seems fair."