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## **Michael Tanner: Americans resisting Obamacare**

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Never underestimate the brilliance of our federal bureaucracy.

The Department of Health and Human Services has announced that it must delay implementation of new reimbursement codes for Medicare. Those new regulations would have increased the total number of reimbursement codes from the current 18,000 to more than 140,000 separate codes. The delay will undoubtedly come as a relief for physicians who will have additional time to try to understand the bureaucratic complexity of rules that, for example, apply 36 different codes for treating a snake bite, depending on the type of snake, its geographical region, and whether the incident was accidental, intentional self-harm, assault, or undetermined. The new codes also thoroughly differentiate between nine different types of hang-gliding injuries, four different types of alligator attacks, and the important difference between injuries sustained by walking into a wall and those resulting from walking into a lamppost.

And Democrats wonder why Americans still resist having the government control our health care?

Less than a month before the Supreme Court hears arguments on the constitutionality of Obamacare, the American people have already reached their judgment. According to the latest USA Today poll, fully 75 percent of Americans believe the new health-care law's individual mandate is unconstitutional. And if the Court doesn't throw Obamacare out, Americans want Congress to do so: Half of voters want the law repealed, compared to 44 percent who want it retained. Moreover, those who want it repealed feel much more intensely about it. Fully 32 percent "strongly support" repeal, compared to just 18 percent who "strongly oppose" it. This is consistent with other polls — for example, the latest Rasmussen poll has 53 percent of likely voters supporting repeal, with just 38 percent opposed — and virtually unchanged since the law passed..

Despite constant predictions by the media and the laws supporters, Obamacare is not becoming more popular.

The public seems to understand that government intervention does not generally make things less expensive. And there are good reasons for the public's skepticism. For example, the Congressional Budget Office reported in December that at least six programs that were supposed to save money under Obamacare not only don't, but some actually are increasing costs. And Jonathan Gruber, one

of the architects of both Obamacare and its precursor Romneycare, now says that premiums are likely to rise under the new health-care law. In fact, Gruber warns that, even after receiving government subsidies, some individuals will end up paying more than they would have without the reform. Gee, thanks, Mr. President.

And the public understands that imposing new taxes, mandates, and regulations will do nothing to create jobs in a struggling economy. In fact, a poll released last month by the Chamber of Commerce showed that for 74 percent of small businesses they're "causing an impediment to job creation."

At the same time, the controversy over the administration's contraception mandate has brought home to voters just how coercive the health-care law really is.

Most of all, Americans understand that, from the beginning, the debate over health-care reform has been about control. The Obama administration believes that decisions about health care are simply too important and too complex for the average American and his doctor to make for themselves. Only the experts in Washington can get those decisions right. After all, only Washington can understand the difference between a burn from a hot toaster (Code No. X15.1) and a burn from an electronic-game keyboard (Code No. Y93.C1).

Unfortunately for the Obama administration, the American people just don't believe them.