



Kinder: State health exchanges are the “gateway to Obamacare”

BY
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— Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder was among the hundreds of protestors in Jefferson City Tuesday voicing their opposition to the new health care law, on the same day that the United States Supreme Court was debating the constitutionality of the law’s individual coverage requirement.

Kinder, who has pursued his own legal challenge to the law, said in an interview Tuesday that he believes the entirety of the Affordable Care Act should be struck down by the Court.

“This law needs to be ripped out, root and branch, repealed, and replaced with market oriented health care reforms that put patients and doctors in charge,” he told PoliticMo, after attending two rallies in the state’s capitol city.

In addition to coinciding with the Court’s oral arguments, the Tuesday rallies also came on the same day that the state Senate was debating legislation that would ban state-level health care exchanges until approved by voters.

State lawmakers have blocked millions of dollars in federal funds for the exchanges, a key component of implementing the entire health care law.

“[The CATO Institute’s Michael] Tanner said if you pull the plug on the state level exchange, you disable the implementation of Obamacare in your state,” Kinder said. “These exchanges are the gateway to implementing Obamacare.”

Some Missouri Republicans initially supported the creation of exchanges. While members of the Missouri Senate have opposed them from the start, original legislation passed in 2010 with unanimous consent of the Missouri House of Representatives, including the consent of House Speaker Steven Tilley, who spoke to the rallies Tuesday in opposition to the federal law. At the time, supporters argued that if the states did not establish the exchanges, the federal government would.

Kinder said lawmakers have “came up the learning curve” on the health care law, and that he believes the upcoming election and the Court’s expected June decision will turn out in his favor, nixing the urgency for the state to set up the exchanges.

Other lawmakers, including secretary of state candidate and state Sen. Scott Rupp — the sponsor of the legislation that would block the exchanges — also spoke at the rallies.