

POLITICO

Latest GOP brainchild: An individual mandate ... for immigrants - Former Obama aide pitching insurers for ACA enrollment help - SCOTUS cold shoulder on abortion suit leaves battle to the states

By: Kyle Cheney – May 29, 2013

LATEST GOP BRAINCHILD: AN INDIVIDUAL MANDATE ... FOR IMMIGRANTS — A funny thing happened on the way to immigration reform: Republicans started promoting an individual mandate. But don't confuse it with *the* individual mandate — the Obamacare requirement that most Americans obtain health insurance or face a penalty. Republicans are pushing that same concept but only for undocumented immigrants. Per Pro's David Nather: "The Republicans and other conservatives say their rule wouldn't be like Obamacare's at all. Their argument: It's simply fair to ask immigrants to show they won't be a drain on the system before getting full citizenship." But that argument presents a clear problem: it's the same logic that backers of Obamacare used to justify the health law's insurance requirement: if people are forced to get insured, they won't strain taxpayers by showing up at the emergency room as often.

--Cue the conservative bellyaching: "That is virtually the opposite of the main point they made against Obamacare," said Alex Nowrasteh of the Cato Institute ... "It's totally reasonable to make sure you don't expand the welfare state, but there's no need to do that by imposing a discredited, Obama-style individual mandate." <http://politico.pro/143WAel>

Good morning and welcome to Wednesday PULSE, where we're flabbergasted by the Scripps National Spelling Bee's decision to weave in a vocab test, along with the already-excruciating task of spelling words like "cymotrichous" and "appoggiatura." Organizers say it's part of reinforcing the Spelling Bee's purpose: to not just encourage good spelling but a good understanding of language and word usage. PULSE is taking a "pococurante" position toward the whole thing: <http://bit.ly/141lco6>
"Run and tell all of the angels, PULSE could take all night."

FORMER OBAMA AIDE PITCHING INSURERS FOR ACA ENROLLMENT HELP — Nancy-Ann DeParle, an architect of the Affordable Care Act and former aide to President Barack Obama, is leaning on insurers for millions of dollars to support Obamacare enrollment. Per Pro's Jennifer Haberkorn and Brett Norman: "Now in the private sector, DeParle is asking top executives at several health insurance companies to donate \$1 million or more to Enroll America, a nonprofit organization promoting Obamacare enrollment, several sources familiar with her role said." There's nothing

wrong with what she's doing, but it's another sign of the desperation of advocates to scratch together funds for outreach and enrollment. <http://politico.pro/19kfLXc>

TODAY: HEARING ON OBAMACARE MANDATE PENALTIES — The Treasury and the IRS (cue the ominous music) hosts a meeting today on what kind of penalties will be levied when people fail to obtain insurance that meets minimum coverage standards required in the health care law. The 10 a.m. meeting is scheduled to be held at the IRS's headquarters at 1111 Constitution Ave.

SCOTUS COLD SHOULDER ON ABORTION SUIT LEAVES BATTLE TO THE STATES — Anti-abortion state lawmakers will have to put their thinking caps on to work around a decision by the high court that upholds an Appeals Court ruling prohibiting Indiana from defunding Planned Parenthood. The move by the Supreme Court is likely to touch off another wave of more targeted anti-abortion legislation meant to block Planned Parenthood from funding abortion services without violating the spirit of the Indiana decision. Pro's Kathryn Smith reports: "In letting the ruling stand, the high court avoids touching on that and the many other ways states can defund groups that provide abortions. State lawmakers who oppose abortion rights still 'have a lot of different tools in their arsenal to attack family planning providers that also do abortion,' said Elizabeth Nash, state issues manager at the Guttmacher Institute, which supports abortion rights." <http://politico.pro/11nw9hU>

--Meanwhile, the Republican standard-bearer for Virginia governor distanced himself Tuesday from suggestions that Planned Parenthood has been as deadly to the black community as white supremacists. But POLITICO's Emily Schultheis peels back the onion to find that Cuccinelli has espoused similar, albeit less inflammatory, rhetoric to suggest Planned Parenthood has racist roots. "In a 2011 speech to the Virginia Christian Alliance, Cuccinelli made reference to Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger, who's sometimes accused of racist motivations for building clinics in low-income and black areas of the country ... 'I would also encourage you to pull out the map of Virginia. Look at where the abortion clinics are. Go look at that,' he continued. 'That doesn't make you mad? Well you're a lot calmer person than I am.'" <http://politi.co/13gb3VU>

REPORT FINDS MINN. HAS THE HEALTHIEST SENIORS — The United Health Foundation issued a report Wednesday morning that found Minnesota is home to the nation's healthiest seniors. The report ranks states based on 34 metrics. The Obama administration's Kathy Greenlee, the assistant secretary of aging, plans to keynote an event on the report Wednesday. <http://bit.ly/13hWDEC>

E&C STAFF UNVEIL SGR REFORM FRAMEWORK — Medicare providers would have the option to opt out of the programs' existing fee-for-service framework under a draft SGR reform circulated Tuesday by House Energy and Commerce Committee staff. The framework, which will be the subject of a June 5 hearing, would scrap the existing Medicare physician payment formula in favor of an "improved fee for service system" that offers providers a chance to opt out in favor of "new ways of delivering care." But the big battle, how to pay for the revised formula, is the true test for the proposal's prospects — and the committee draft doesn't come with a proposal. Comments on the plan are due by June 10. The proposal: <http://1.usa.gov/18qvLrP>

REPORT: THIRTEEN INSURERS PLAN OFFERINGS ON MARYLAND EXCHANGE — That's the word from the Baltimore Sun, which reported the announcement from state exchange officials on Tuesday afternoon. The insurers slated to participate are: Aetna,

BEST Life and Health Insurance Co., CareFirst, Coventry, Delta, DentaQuest Mid-Atlantic Inc., Dominion Dental Services Inc., Evergreen Health Cooperative Inc., Guardian Life Insurance Co. of America, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic, Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., United Concordia and UnitedHealthcare. <http://bsun.md/10EJUd9>

POLITICO PRO TO LAUNCH ‘CEO REPORT’ IN JUNE: POLITICO Pro’s latest newsletter, “CEO Report,” will debut next week. Written by POLITICO Playbook’s Mike Allen and Pro Editor Martin Kady II, the once-a-month feature will offer executives and policy professionals an exclusive summary of the most important policy debates. CEO Report’s easy-to-read, forward-looking format is designed to get you up to speed without having to sort through the daily minutia of Washington policy. Interested in receiving CEO Report? Become a Pro today:<https://www.politicopro.com/proinfo/>

MEDICINE FOR SCHOOLKIDS GETS DAY IN CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT — California’s high court is set to begin hearing arguments today on which school officials can administer medication to children with chronic conditions like diabetes. The American Nurses Association, a lead plaintiff in the suit, argues that a move by the state Department of Education to allow unlicensed school employees to administer insulin is unlawful. The American Diabetes Association appealed lower court rulings to send the suit to the high court.<http://bit.ly/116smGT>

AP: JUST ONE INSURER PLANS OFFERING ON N.H. EXCHANGE — That insurer? Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield, which said last week that it was the only carrier to propose a plan, according to the Associated Press. Perhaps it’s a New England thing, suggested one industry expert. Caroline Pearson, vice president of the health consulting company Avalere Health, told the AP that Vermont’s exchange is expected to feature two carriers, while Rhode Island will have two carriers in the individual exchange and three in the small group exchange.<http://bit.ly/Zql3P1>

ELDER ADVOCATES JOIN FORCES — The American Health Care Association and the Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care announced plans to merge, creating a larger, more forceful voice for elder and long-term care issues. The consolidation is expected to be completed by July 1, and the group will retain the name American Health Care Association. “The economic straits our profession faces necessitated this union. We have heard the call of our members, and we have responded,” said Mark Parkinson, AHCA president and CEO.

WHAT WE’RE READING, by Paige Winfield Cunningham

Phony drugs are proliferating in Africa and undermining the country’s war on malaria, the Wall Street Journal reports. <http://on.wsj.com/144ObaG>

Some hospitals are using unique strategies to encourage hand-washing among workers, who wash up as little as 30 percent of the time they’re interacting with patients, the New York Times reports. <http://nyti.ms/119hhb8>

The New York Times also writes about health care challenges in Alaska, where remote areas — some without any roads — make it even more complicated to deliver care.<http://nyti.ms/156qQbM>

Dartmouth professor Jonathan Skinner disputes the findings of a study released Tuesday by the Center for Studying Health System Change concluding that geographic variation in Medicare costs has more to do with the health of patients and less to do with efficient delivery systems. Skinner’s response: <http://bit.ly/15gXkPN>

The National Republican Campaign Committee plans to target three more House Democrats with ads raising concerns about the IRS' work implementing the health care law. The Washington Post story: <http://wapo.st/13XUY9A>

The California Senate wants more funding for mental health and dental programs for the poor in next year's state budget, but those priorities are bumping up against goals outlined by the state Assembly. Both chambers have until June 15 to iron out their differences, the L.A. Times reports. <http://lat.ms/15hfhxQ>