

AMA

“Constitutional principles” key to ACA’s individual mandate

Simon Lazarus, public policy counsel for the National Senior Citizens Law Center, said Thursday that the individual mandate within the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which requires all Americans to buy health insurance by 2014, really comes down to one thing: Constitutional principles. “This is not about health care or policy that defines the health care system,” Lazarus said.

Ilya Shapiro, senior fellow in constitutional studies and editor-in-chief of the *Cato Supreme Court Review*, emphasized that same point while joining Lazarus on a panel regarding legal challenges to the ACA. The session rounded out this year’s National Advocacy Conference.

“Whatever the federal government does still has to come within the four corners of the Constitution,” Shapiro said.

Shapiro emphasized the fact that never before has the federal government asserted the power to require people to engage in such economic activity.

“Even in the height of the New Deal, Congress was not telling people to buy wheat or to become farmers,” Shapiro said.