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Wednesday, July 01, 2009

Wal-Mart Looks Out for Number One

 Posted by: [Kevin Glass](#) at 4:58 PM

Players in the health care reform debate are abuzz today with news of Wal-Mart's support of a mandate that all employers in the United States provide health insurance to their employees.

The Left has trumpeted this as evidence that even those parties who should be most against a mandate like this admit it's necessary for the good of the country. A little research into some of the debate exposes otherwise.

Hudson Fellow Tevi Troy [writes in Forbes online today](#),

From Wal-Mart's perspective, the move is strategic... the letter was a win-win move--at least for now. Wal-Mart gets some cover from two pillars of the liberal establishment, and the White House and its allies get to claim the support of America's largest employer for a mandate that would order companies to provide health insurance for their workers.

Over at Reason's blog, Peter Suderman suspects that Wal-Mart's in this to [protect itself from competition](#):

Wal-Mart, the nation's largest employer, can afford the costs imposed by an employer mandate. Smaller competitors are likely to find it harder -- and they're not too happy about Wal-Mart's announcement.

The indispensable Mike Cannon suggests that an employer mandate [won't just shield Wal-Mart from small businesses, but its biggest competitors as well](#):

It all became clear when the lobbyist explained the reason for Wal-Mart's position: "Target's health-benefits costs are lower."

I have no idea what Target's or Wal-Mart's health-benefits costs are. Let's say that Target spends \$5,000 per worker on health benefits and Wal-Mart spends \$10,000. An employer mandate that requires both retail giants to spend \$9,000 per worker would have no effect on Wal-Mart. But it would cripple one of Wal-Mart's chief competitors.

And Tim Carney over at the Washington Examiner [takes a hacksaw to the idea \(floated by Left-wing blogger Matt Yglesias\) that big businesses are anti-big government](#).

"The highly ideological behavior of the business community"? What in the world is Yglesias talking about? The Chamber of Commerce's endorsement of Obama's stimulus plan? Or the fact that Barney Frank scored higher on the Chamber's score card than did Ron Paul?

Wal-Mart, a success story of the capitalist system, is using a proposed big-government move in order to beef up its public relations department and potentially protect itself from rivals.


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