

Tampa Bay Times

PolitiFact Florida: Ad distorts to attack Sen. Bill Nelson on health care law

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Thursday, July 12, 2012

A new television ad attacks Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., on the health care law and claims to have "the facts." Then it trots out a series of distortions.

The ad is from an outside spending group called American Commitment, a Washington-based conservative advocacy group. It's a 501(c)4, so it doesn't have to disclose its donors. The ad's website notes that its president, Phil Kerpen, previously worked at other right-leaning groups like the Club for Growth, Americans for Prosperity and the Cato Institute.

"Florida patients and seniors deserve to know what are the facts about President Barack Obama's health care law," the ad begins. "Fact: Bill Nelson was the deciding vote." PolitiFact Florida rated that claim Mostly False.

Nelson was among the 60 senators who voted to move the health care law through the Senate. Opponents of the law have argued that any of those 60 cast the deciding vote, because every vote was needed to pass the bill.

But there's evidence in the record to show that some of those votes were more important than others. Some senators — most notably Sen. Ben Nelson, D-Neb. — held out for special provisions or other concessions. Florida's Nelson wasn't among the hold-outs and played no critical role in the law's passage.

The ad then says that the health law could cost up to \$2 trillion, "double what we were promised." That earned a False rating.

The number is cherry-picked, from a March 2012 report put out by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. The actual number is \$1.76 trillion, and it's only up slightly — less than 10 percent — from the CBO's original cost estimates issued in March 2010. The CBO itself put out a statement correcting claims that it had significantly increased its cost estimates.

But more importantly, when the CBO took into account tax increases and other cost-saving measures in 2010, the health care law actually *reduced* the federal deficit, by about \$124 billion over 10 years.

The ad then says that the law "imposes the largest tax increase in history on the middle class." This claim received a rating of Pants on Fire. Most of the taxes in the health care law fall on high earners (individuals who make \$200,000 or more year, couples who make more than \$250,000) and on the health care industry. And even those tax increases don't add up to the largest in history.

These rulings have been edited for print. Read the full versions at PolitiFact.com/Florida.

[Last modified: Jul 11, 2012 10:43 PM]

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