



Florida House of Representatives
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 22, 2010

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**NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO SECEDE
FROM FEDERAL HEALTH CARE REFORM**

- **Two of five Floridians have inadequate access to basic health care;**
- **24 Percent of Floridians are uninsured;**
- **8 million Floridians are medically disenfranchised;**
- **Every Florida county is considered medically underserved.**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. -- In an outrageous display of partisanship and insensitivity to the needs of working families, Florida House Republicans will showcase today their latest frivolous attempt to block federal efforts to provide medical coverage to tens of millions of uninsured working families and senior citizens.

Only hours ago, members of Congress approved a far-reaching overhaul of the nation's health system. Sunday's health-care vote is being hailed by many healthcare experts and political leaders as a historic advance in social justice, comparable to the establishment of Social Security and Medicare. The legislation is projected to put pressure on rising health care costs and rein in federal budget deficits.

This afternoon, Florida House Republicans in Tallahassee will promote HJR37, a

proposed constitutional amendment to secede from federal efforts to reform the nation's health care system. Seriously deceptive and flawed in its design, the unconstitutional Republican legislation sets the groundwork for any number of future efforts to cut senior citizens access to health care.

“House Republican leaders are once again siding with special interests and trying to kill major health care reforms approved by Congress,” said House Democratic Leader Franklin Sands. “Floridians will reject any attempt to destroy important federal health programs like Medicare, Social Security, and the changes passed by Congress this week. The Republicans’ scare tactics have failed before and their scare tactics will fail again.”

Floridians will embrace the federal health care reforms when they realize the effects, some of which will occur this year. Health insurers, for example, would not be able to deny coverage to children with medical problems or suddenly drop coverage for people who become ill. Insurers must allow children to stay on their parents’ policies until they turn 26. Small businesses could obtain tax credits to help them buy insurance for workers.

For more information about how the federal health care reform legislation will affect you, consider visiting this link to The New York Times:

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/03/21/us/health-care-reform.html>

According to Organizing For America, a grassroots effort of the Democratic National Committee, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Reconciliation Act of 2010, which are expected to be signed into law by President Obama on Tuesday, will offer immediate benefits to millions of Americans through key provisions, including these:

1. **SMALL BUSINESS TAX CREDITS** -- Offers tax credits to small businesses to make employee coverage more affordable. Tax credits of up to 35 percent of premiums will be immediately available to firms that choose to offer coverage. *Effective beginning for calendar year 2010.* (Beginning in 2014, the small business tax credits will cover 50 percent of premiums.)

2. **BEGINS TO CLOSE THE MEDICARE PART D DONUT HOLE**-Provides a \$250 rebate to Medicare beneficiaries who hit the donut hole in 2010. *Effective for calendar year 2010.* (Beginning in 2011, institutes a 50% discount on brand-name drugs in the donut hole; also completely closes the donut hole by 2020.)
3. **FREE PREVENTIVE CARE UNDER MEDICARE**-Eliminates copayments for preventive services and exempts preventive services from deductibles under the Medicare program. *Effective beginning January 1, 2011.*
4. **HELP FOR EARLY RETIREES**-Creates a temporary insurance program (until the Exchanges are available) to help offset the costs of expensive premiums for employers and retirees for health benefits for retirees age 55 to 64. *Effective 90 days after enactment.*
5. **ENDS RESCISSIONS**-Bans insurance companies from dropping people from coverage when they get sick. *Effective 6 months after enactment.*
6. **NO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHILDREN WITH PRE EXISTING CONDITIONS**-Prohibits new health plans in all markets plus grandfathered group health plans from denying coverage to children with preexisting conditions. *Effective 6 months after enactment.* (Beginning in 2014, this prohibition would apply to all persons.)
7. **BANS LIFETIME LIMITS ON COVERAGE**-Prohibits health insurance companies from placing lifetime caps on coverage. *Effective 6 months after enactment.*
8. **BANS RESTRICTIVE ANNUAL LIMITS ON COVERAGE**-Tightly restricts the use of annual limits to ensure access to needed care in all new plans and grandfathered group health plans. These tight restrictions will be defined by HHS. *Effective 6 months after enactment.* (Beginning in 2014, the use of any annual limits would be prohibited for all new plans and grandfathered group health plans.)
9. **FREE PREVENTIVE CARE UNDER NEW PRIVATE PLANS**-Requires new private plans to cover preventive services with no copayments and with preventive services being exempt from deductibles. *Effective 6 months after enactment.*
10. **NEW, INDEPENDENT APPEALS PROCESS**-Ensures consumers in new plans have access to an effective internal and external appeals process to appeal decisions by their health insurance plan. *Effective 6 months after enactment.*
11. **ENSURING VALUE FOR PREMIUM PAYMENTS**-Requires plans in the individual and small group market to spend 80 percent of premium dollars on medical services, and plans in the large group market to spend 85 percent. Insurers that do not meet these thresholds must provide rebates to policyholders. *Effective on January 1,*

2011.

12. IMMEDIATE HELP FOR THE UNINSURED UNTIL EXCHANGE IS AVAILABLE (INTERIM HIGH RISK POOL)-Provides immediate access to affordable insurance for Americans who are uninsured because of a preexisting condition through a temporary subsidized high risk pool. *Effective 90 days after enactment.*

13. EXTENDS COVERAGE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE UP TO 26TH BIRTHDAY THROUGH PARENTS' INSURANCE - Requires new health plans and certain grandfathered plans to allow young people up to their 26th birthday to remain on their parents' insurance policy, at the parents' choice. *Effective 6 months after enactment.*

14. COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS-Increases funding for Community Health Centers to allow for nearly a doubling of the number of patients seen by the centers over the next 5 years. *Effective beginning in fiscal year 2010.*

15. INCREASING NUMBER OF PRIMARY CARE DOCTORS-Provides new investment in training programs to increase the number of primary care doctors, nurses, and public health professionals. *Effective beginning in fiscal year 2010.*

16. PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SALARY-Prohibits group health plans from establishing any eligibility rules for health care coverage that have the effect of discriminating in favor of higher wage employees. *Effective 6 months after enactment.*

17. HEALTH INSURANCE CONSUMER INFORMATION-Provides aid to states in establishing offices of health insurance consumer assistance in order to help individuals with the filing of complaints and appeals. *Effective beginning in FY 2010.*

18. CREATES NEW, VOLUNTARY, PUBLIC LONG TERM CARE INSURANCE PROGRAM-Creates a long term care insurance program to be financed by voluntary payroll deductions to provide home and community-based services to adults who become functionally disabled. *Effective on January 1, 2011.*

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