

It is a sad day for the State of Nebraska

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Created 12/19/09

It is a sad day for the State of Nebraska. Although not the first time, one of our esteemed Senators has decided to vote for federal legislation that will further dampen this once great country's future. 'Freedom and opportunity' were the essence of this country; they were the ideals that made America the greatest nation this world has ever seen. However, those very ideals have been and continue to be eroded away. The current health care bill is another step in this erosion, and whether one believes in the empty rhetoric of politicians or not, this country is about to make another grave mistake that it will pay for generation after generation.

We all know the rhetoric attached with the current health bill: "Choice and Competition", "Bending the Cost Curve", or "If we don't pass healthcare the federal government will go bankrupt". However, what needs to be examined is what this healthcare bill is actually enacting.

(1) 'Choice and Competition' - This healthcare legislation proposes health care exchanges. Sounds competitive, but it is just regulative legislation that makes for crony capitalism. Instead of hundreds of insurance companies offering thousands of plans to fit different people's health insurance needs, the federal government will pick and choose which insurance companies are qualified, and dictate what insurance policies must cover. How does this increase choice and competition? It doesn't, it is the polar opposite. This kind of exchange limits competition. It also puts 'big insurance' in the pockets of politicians as it will be the government who determines who is and is not 'qualified'. This creates an oligopoly that is not market based, but politically driven.

(2) 'Bending the Cost Curve' - The reason that the health care costs in this country have risen so dramatically isn't from a lack of insurance, it is from too much insurance and a third party payer system.

Insurance in this country is vastly employer based insurance. This is the first problem as individuals are insulated from the premium costs. Unfortunately, the government encourages this by offering tax breaks to businesses who offer health insurance but does not offer the same tax breaks to individuals buying their own insurance.

As premiums increase they are largely taken on as increased business expenses, and not directly felt by the employee. However, employees are indirectly affected by loss in wages as the cost of their employment has increased. Therefore, premiums are able to go up more frequently without the actual end game customer shopping elsewhere, or perhaps looking for policies that cover only the treatments they may or may not need.

Since the individual has health insurance, and by and large these policies cover most health procedures, what reason do they have to price shop health care? Individuals have no reason to weigh the costs of health care procedures against their health benefits when their costs are the same with or without that treatment. It makes it a pretty easy decision to consume more health care.

Alas, the biggest bender in the cost curve was the creation of Medicare; only it was a dramatic bend upward. All senior citizens, the largest consumers of health care, have their health care paid for by the taxpayers. Only this insurance has become so costly that the taxpayers can't afford it and it is insolvent.

(3) 'If we don't pass healthcare the federal government will go bankrupt'- The simpler truth is that if health care costs continue to rise on the path they have, Americans are not going to be able to continue to increase their consumption of health care at this rate. Now there are ways to control the costs of health care, but they are not in this health care legislation, and are not even on the table with this administration. Therefore, knowing that costs are going to increase, individuals need to ask themselves. Would I rather decide for myself what health care I'm to do without, or would I rather have the federal government dictate that choice for me.

The bottom line is this healthcare legislation is about more government intrusion into the health sector than about improving health care. This legislation will further our nations long term fiscal problems. This legislation will push us ever closer to a single payer system, and take health care out the hands of individuals and into the hands of bureaucrats. Senator Ben Nelson knows this, yet is going to support the legislation.

In 1997, the United States Senate was one vote away from passing a Balanced Budget Amendment. Nebraska Senator Bob Kerry voted against the legislation. This year alone our federal deficit is going to reach \$1.4 trillion, and our federal debt is over \$12 trillion. Big congratulations Senator Kerry.

Today is a sad for Nebraska, but we have no one to blame but ourselves. We put these people in office and we let them erode our freedoms and spend our labors. We are truly slaves to the federal government. Its ok America, we are not the first country to have its personal freedoms taken away; rather, we were the first country that truly had personal freedom to begin with. History does repeat itself. Lets just hope somewhere along the line another group of people will stand up for their individual rights and liberties and create another United States of America.