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Obama says law: "Doing what it's designed to do"

> "Nobody counted on the hiccups turning into cardiac arrest."
> – Kimberley Strassel, Wall Street Journal, July 19, 2013

President Obama plans to travel the country this summer to convince people that his health care law is a good deal for them and the nation's economy. Rather than admit his law costs too much and fails to work the way he promised, the President and Democrats just keep trying to sell it. As the President asks the American people to trust his campaign-style sales pitch, there are some facts from this month that conveniently won't make it into his stump speeches.

Destroying the Middle-Class

Last week the President talked about middle-class families in the context of his health care law. He said, "[s]o that's just one way this [health care] law is helping middle-class families."

But his friends have a different take. In a letter to Democrat leaders, three major unions, led by James Hoffa of the Teamsters, said, "unless you and the Obama Administration enact an equitable fix, the ACA will shatter not only our hard-earned health benefits, but destroy the foundation of the 40 hour work week that is backbone of the American middle class."

Shifting to Part-Time Work

In a bipartisan op-ed, Senators Susan Collins and Joe Donnelly took on a provision in the President's health care law that defined a "full-time employee" as anyone working 30 hours a week, as opposed to the traditional 40 hour work week. The health care law provides a perverse incentive for small businesses to use part-time workers or independent contractors.

The Senators' op-ed said: "This rule is causing a growing number of employers to cut the hours of their workers, and according to one study by the UC Berkeley Labor Center, at least 2.3 million workers are at risk. This provision of the health law is not in the best interests of the country, and it needs to change."

Uniting Unions against the Law

On the day of the President's health care speech, July 18, the Laborers International Union of North America wrote to the President: "[a]pproximately 3 million laborers, retirees, and their families now face the very real prospect of losing their health benefits. This, I must remind you, was something that you promised would not happen."

This is on the heels of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the United Food and Commercial Workers, and UNITE-HERE calling for changes to the law.

Losing Your Doctor

More than four years ago, on June 15, 2009, President Obama pledged: "no matter how we reform health care, we will keep this promise: If you like your doctor, you will be able to keep your doctor. Period."

But last week, the website for the President's health care law, Healthcare.gov, added to its Q and A section this question: "Can I keep my own doctor?" And the answer is not what Americans were first told. The Obama Administration wrote, "Depending on the plan you choose in the Marketplace, you *may* be able to keep your current doctor." [emphasis added]

Raising Premiums

States are beginning to release preliminary information on the rates consumers likely will pay for the President's health insurance starting January 1. While a large majority of states have yet to announce rate details, a pattern is clearly emerging: Washington mandated, government approved insurance is going to cost a lot of money.

Last Friday, the state of Indiana broke the news that insurance rates there will increase 72 percent for people in the individual market. The Indianapolis Star wrote, "[t]he spike in costs is due primarily to new mandates under the [health care] law."

The President wants to hold up premium decreases in New York as evidence his health care law is working. But as one fact checker put it, "he doesn't make clear that that kind of premium decrease is likely to be the exception, rather than the rule, among all states." Because of New York's existing state health care regulations, individual market premiums were some of the highest in the country. Only 17,000 New Yorkers buy health insurance coverage in the individual market today. President Obama's individual mandate will force an estimated 615,000 new customers into the individual market, and only then will some people's premiums go down. But actuaries estimate monthly premiums in New York's individual market, after the health care law is enacted, will still be 37 percent higher than the national average. People in other states like Ohio, Maryland, and Indiana will see their premiums go up dramatically.