



The Stouffer Report: The Feds Want to Tax Your Health Care

As the federal government continues to spend us into oblivion, new ideas are being floated to raise revenues immediately. Every one of these ideas, so far, raises your taxes and invents new taxes for you to pay.

Most folks agree health care reform is needed in this country. Instead of adding more government, we should do better record-keeping that follows folks from doctor to doctor, transparency in spending and competition.

However, the most talked-about "solution" has been taxing health care benefits you receive from an employer. It seems the more folks who hear about this proposal, the more who become upset. This includes those who supported Democrats in last year's election — the very people who want to tax benefits in order to get more of your money.

The nonpartisan [Congressional Budget Office](#) issued a report recently that says reforming health care in this country could cost at least \$1.6 trillion over 10 years. U.S. Sen. Orrin Hatch recently said for every dollar spent on this new program, 50 cents will be deficit spending.

Taxing benefits could provide roughly one-third of this money to the federal government. Add health care reform costs to everything else that has come out of Washington, D.C., over the past six months, and there is no telling how many billions of dollars will be needed to make up for the money that will be spent over the next decade.

Taxing health care benefits as if they were income is not a new idea. George W. Bush talked about the possibility of doing this very thing a few years ago. It became an issue again during the presidential campaign last year, when U.S. Sen. John McCain proposed such a tax. He

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was immediately criticized by Barack Obama, who told audiences everywhere that taxing health care would equal a crushing tax on the middle class. What a difference a year makes.

Even unions are asking questions about this plan, and some are planning to exempt them. They say taxing benefits means fewer dollars in the pockets of union members, which translates into fewer donations when the unions raise money to give to candidates at election time. In early June, more than two dozen union groups sent a letter to Congress, warning them against backing the tax plan. There are approximately 160 million Americans who have health care. These would be the folks who see their taxes go through the roof on their health care policies, in the name of paying for government-run health insurance.

Unfortunately, the federal government has been moving toward ownership or control of more parts of our lives than ever before. It started with banks last year, when the government moved in to bail them out in the name of stopping a worldwide recession. Then, the federal government started to take over the auto industry. Now, it wants to control 20 percent of our nation's gross domestic product (GDP). Once it owns health care, it can then start determining who gets coverage. This is called rationing, and it has been a complete failure everywhere it has been tried.

I believe our taxes are high enough. When the federal tax cuts that came from the Bush Administration expire next year, we will be back to the tax rates of Bill Clinton. Now, President Obama wants to raise your taxes even more AND start taxing other things? We have to make our voices heard, or else we will lose our country and our freedoms.

*Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll,
Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray,
Saline, and a part of Clay.*

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.