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The Stouffer Report: *Opting out of Health Care*

If voters agree, Missouri could join a growing list of states that want no part of so-called health care "reform" legislation that is currently being debated in Washington, D.C.

[Senate Joint Resolution 25](#) is a bill I wrote about over the last couple of weeks. It would allow Missouri to opt out of the federal health care bill, leaving the decision to our state's voters. We are not the first state to do this, and I doubt we will be the last. There is some interesting history behind allowing states to weigh-in on the option to participate in federal government programs.

More than 70 years ago, President Roosevelt signed a bill that created the "Social Security Act of 1935." Back then, federal lawmakers were concerned about the authority to tax local and state governments. So, there were some public employees who chose not to take part in Social Security. There are still approximately five million public employees who are not taxed for Social Security. Instead, they rely on their own retirement plan.

Fast forward to 1965, when Medicaid became law. States were not required to take part, but the president thought offering to pay 50 to 77 percent of a state's Medicaid cost would be too good of a deal to reject. The last state to be included in Medicaid was Arizona, in 1982.

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Now, onto present day. There are four states (Arizona, Florida, Kansas and Minnesota) with ballot measures similar to our proposal that will be decided in 2010.

Other states are getting petition signatures in order to have their measure on the ballot for elections in 2010. I have no doubt there will be more states that will achieve the goal of getting something on the ballot next year. Hopefully, this will drive home the message you tried to send to your own federal lawmakers this summer — you want no part of this federal takeover utilizing 20 percent of our nation’s economy and allowing the federal government to tell you which doctor you can and cannot see.

As I have said before, the current “reform” of health care being pushed by federal lawmakers is not really about insuring the uninsured. It is about government giving itself unprecedented power and control over your daily lives. This kind of government mandate was attempted in 1994 and failed miserably, thank goodness.

My hope is that all of the lawmakers on Capitol Hill will see the error of their ways, listen to their constituents and pull the bills that are currently in the U.S. House and Senate. I am not saying nothing needs to be done. What I am saying is it should not fall to government to do what you and I can do better and without raising taxes.

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.