

Week of August 2, 2010



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Missourians Endorse “Health Care Freedom Act”

On Tuesday, Aug. 3, Missourians cast their ballots in the primary election, which also contained a statewide referendum called Proposition C, better known as the “Health Care Freedom Act.” Nearly one million Missourians voted on the issue, and an overwhelming 71 percent opposed the federal government’s attempt to impose health care mandates on the citizens of our state.

Missouri was the first state in the nation to vote on the Health Care Freedom Act, which was drafted in response to the federal health care bill passed earlier this year by Congress and signed into law by the President. By passing Prop C, our state is sending a clear message to leaders in Washington, D.C. that Missourians do not support the costly mandates that take away our personal health care choices.

The Health Care Freedom Act was passed as a referendum in [HB 1764](#) during the 2010 regular Missouri legislative session, which then put the issue directly to the voters. I voted for it because I believe in personal choice and allowing Missourians to vote on the issue. Because it was approved, Missouri will now have a law on the books that prohibits any person, employer, or health care provider from being compelled to participate in any health care system. Just as importantly, individuals and employers will still be allowed to pay directly for lawful health care services without being required to pay a penalty or fine, and health care providers can accept payment for health care services from individuals or employers without being subject to fines or penalties. Also, the purchase or sale of health insurance in private health care systems cannot be prohibited by law. One of the key provisions in the federal health care law requires most Americans to have health insurance by 2014 or be subjected to penalties and fines.

Approval of Prop C does not mean Missourians are prohibited from participating in the federal health care plan if they so choose. It simply offers what the federal government did not: the right to decide what is best for you.

Although Prop C's passage will likely be accompanied by a court challenge, federal lawmakers would be wise to listen to the will of the electorate. Voters have clearly spoken. Perhaps if politicians in Washington, D.C. had listened to the voices of the people when the health care bill originally came to a vote, states wouldn't have to act on behalf of their citizens against this unprecedented intrusion by the federal government. Other states have legislation or similar initiatives in the works, an obvious sign that the federal government has far overstepped its bounds by interfering in the health care choices of Americans. Oklahoma and Arizona will follow Missouri's lead and take the issue to their voters in November.

The outcome of this week's vote and the efforts in other states show the unpopularity of the federal health care plan. This misguided effort at reform will only raise taxes on hard-working, middle-class Missourians, increase health care costs, amount to a loss of jobs, and add a substantial burden to our already cash-strapped state. In this economic environment, government should instead be focused on boosting small businesses, creating jobs, improving education, developing a highly skilled workforce—and most importantly, cutting unnecessary costs. Missouri, like most other states, is simply not in the position to shoulder the costs associated with the federal health care plan. This year we experienced what it was like to create a budget that provides for essential programs and services in the midst of a historic budget shortfall. Unfortunately, our budget situation is expected to get worse before it gets better, and we must conserve, not spend recklessly.

This week, Missourians finally had the opportunity to let the nation know what we think of the federal health care bill. I suspect when the citizens of other states receive the same consideration, Washington may be forced to listen.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact my office with your questions or concerns at any time. We look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions and trying to answer any questions you may have. You can reach us by phone at 866-277-0882 (toll-free) or 573-751-2272, or by fax at 573-526-7381.

Senator David Pearce serves Bates, Cass, Johnson and Vernon counties in the 31st State Senatorial District.

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