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GOVERNOR, HOUSE DEMS' OBAMACARE MEDICAID EXPANSION BILL FAILS

House Republicans remain united against unchecked entitlement expansion

NH Democrats' proposal would have expanded Medicaid under the "Affordable" Care Act (aka ObamaCare) but without thoughtful and reasonable financial safeguards. Their plan would have continued regardless of whether the federal government grants the necessary waivers or not. Their plan would have continued no matter how high its costs -- the lowest estimate is around \$40-45 million in general funds for the 2022/23 budget. Their plan would have ended only if the federal government reduces its promised cost share. In essence, Democrats are proposing to expand an out-of-control Obamacare Medicaid entitlement program. This is not the New Hampshire way.

Republicans offered a number of reasonable amendments, in committee and on the House floor, in an attempt to fix this flawed bill. All were rejected by the Democratic majority.

- SSHB1** Medicaid expansion bill – Passed (198-146)
97% of Republicans voted against the bill
- 2418h** Majority amendment that does not fix the majority of our concerns with the underlying bill, including financial safeguards, spending, redundancy, cost-sharing and oversight – Passed (204-151)
94% of Republicans voted against the amendment
- 2434h** Cost cap- if the program exceeds 12% cost growth in a biennium the program would automatically terminate – Failed
99% of Republicans voted for the amendment
- 2415h** Removes the repeal of the Joint Health Care Reform Oversight Committee – Failed
98% of Republicans voted for the amendment
- 2419h** Removes the repeal of a state based health care exchange/marketplace – Failed
99% of Republicans voted for the amendment
- 2420h** Removes the requirement for "at least 3" qualified health plans to be available on the exchange prior to the start of the individual premium assistance program – Failed
96% of Republicans voted for this amendment

House Republican Leaders Comment Outcome of Special Session

CONCORD - House Republican Leader Gene Chandler (R-Bartlett) and House Republican Policy Leader Laurie Sanborn (R-Bedford) released the following statements following the House and Senate votes on Special Session House Bill 1, relative to Medicaid expansion. House Democrats passed the bill by a 198-146 vote. The Senate bill was tabled and the Senate voted 13-11 to kill the House bill.

House Republican Leader Gene Chandler (R-Bartlett)

“The Democrats’ Obamacare Medicaid expansion plan provided nothing in the way of financial safeguards, cost-control or cost-sharing. Proponents never suggested how we pay for this entitlement expansion that could cost state taxpayers tens of millions of dollars per biennium, in perpetuity. Republicans offered a number of reasonable amendments in an attempt to fix this flawed bill that were all rejected by the Democratic majority. This plan has no provisions to ensure our exposure to fiscal catastrophe is minimized. The Democrats’ proposal was nothing but an attempt to expand an out-of-control Obamacare Medicaid entitlement program. This is not the New Hampshire way. New Hampshire simply could not afford to pass this legislation.”

House Republican Policy Leader Laurie Sanborn (R-Bedford)

“Fiscally-prudent Republicans joined 26 other states and decided not to participate in a federal program that dramatically increases spending with no caps and no taxpayer protection. Expanding Obamacare would have cost the state an additional \$40-45 million each biennium or more. This would have increased the state’s budget enough to require a new tax. In fact, this would have been the largest single expansion of government spending this state has ever seen.”

“Republicans care about the people of this state and believe it is important that all its residents have access to affordable health care. Expanding Obamacare is not the New Hampshire way to make healthcare more affordable or accessible for anyone. The results today reflect that sentiment.”

Important Upcoming Dates & Events

- Friday, November 22, 2013 – Last day to report retained Bills
- Friday, November 28, 2013 – State Offices Closed
- Wednesday, January 8, 2014 – First House session of 2014
- Wednesday, January 8, 2014 – Last day to introduce House Legislation



“The passing of Councilor Ray Burton is a tremendous loss to the people of the North Country and to the entire Granite State, which he deeply loved. Having worked with Ray for many years, I know first hand his unwavering dedication to the people of his district and New Hampshire, which are better places because of his service. Ray exemplified what a politician should be and truly put the people he represented above politics. A hole has been left in the North Country that can never truly be filled. Ray is one who is simply irreplaceable, and he will be profoundly missed by all.”

~ House Republican Leader Gene Chandler

A public memorial will be held at Plymouth State University’s Student Union Building December 14th at 1:00pm.

NHGOP STATEMENT ON MEDICAID EXPANSION VOTE

Concord - New Hampshire Republican State Committee Chairman Jennifer Horn released the following statement on today's vote on Medicaid expansion:

"Governor Maggie Hassan is a loyal supporter of President Obama and his failed health care agenda that is hurting working families. Governor Hassan is so dedicated to the disastrous rollout of this terrible law that she would not compromise on a deal to help needy Granite States get private insurance.

"The Governor never had any intention of compromising or working across the aisle on a bipartisan solution for New Hampshire. She was more interested in running around the state campaigning for ObamaCare than sitting down with Republicans in Concord.

"Governor Hassan has demonstrated that she is a partisan politician who is incapable of providing independent and effective leadership for our state. She has let down her constituents and proven that she would rather stand up for ObamaCare than get results for New Hampshire."

Photo: Rep. Dave Hess (R-Hooksett) Recited the Gettysburg Address on the House floor Thursday, in costume.



Expand Medicaid? Only If You Want a State Tax Increase

By: Rep. Laurie Sanborn (R-Bedford) & Neal Kurk (R-Weare)

Many people in New Hampshire believe that low-income New Hampshire adults should have health insurance. Some low-income adults have it now through their employers, but many do not.

Expanding Medicaid under Obamacare is one way to provide health insurance to low income adults, but unless real safeguards are put into place and until we believe we can rely on the federal government, the ultimate result in New Hampshire will be a new tax, perhaps a broad-based income or sales tax -- in other words, higher taxes for the middle class, who will be charged with paying for the expansion.

Medicaid is currently a federal-state partnership that pays for health services for poor people in particular categories of need, including children, pregnant women, and the disabled. Under Obamacare, states have the option to expand the program to cover able-bodied, poor adults even if they are not in a listed category of need, with the federal government picking up all of the cost for the first three years, slowly decreasing to 90% of the cost in 2021 and beyond.

Expanding Medicaid under Obamacare would add some 50-60,000 individuals to the program. The state's 10% cost share in the early 2020s is estimated at around \$40-45 million each biennium. This would increase the state's budget enough to require a new tax. In fact, this would be the largest single expansion of government spending this state has ever seen. New Hampshire residents don't want a sales or income tax, and we already have the third highest business taxes in the nation. New Hampshire's economic growth and its ability to attract and retain employers would be damaged by any such tax.

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**Expand Medicaid?
Only If You Want a State Tax Increase
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Unfortunately, these estimated costs – as high as they are – may be too low. States like Arizona and New Mexico, which recently expanded Medicaid, had program costs significantly higher than estimated. One should not be surprised if the cost estimates for New Hampshire’s program were similarly flawed.

The sad reality is that, once NH expands Medicaid under Obamacare, it will be politically impossible to stop it. Why? Because, for example, when costs inevitably rise, expansion supporters will successfully argue that the state cannot deprive 50-60,000 low-income individuals of their health insurance.

There are other, perhaps more significant, issues surrounding the expansion of Medicaid under Obamacare.

Will insuring additional people without increasing the number of doctors and nurses increase waiting times for medical and surgical appointments for those who are already insured?

Are we discouraging people who are currently working part-time or in an entry level job from striving for full-time or a higher paying job, just to stay on tax-payer funded health care? What effect will this have on our economy?

Why should fiscally-prudent New Hampshire participate in a federal program that increases the annual federal deficit and the national debt (at least \$2.4 billion from New Hampshire alone)?

How can we rely upon the federal government not to make cuts to the program and further increase our state’s financial obligations, knowing that both Democrats and Republicans in DC have already said potential cuts need to be implemented now?

Is it fair to those who pay their full premiums, deductibles and co-pays to have fewer choices of hospitals and doctors than those who pay nothing for their health costs under Expanded Medicaid?

Is it fair that eligibility for expanded Medicaid is based on income only and not assets, so that a 50-year old who lives on a yacht and has a very low income qualifies for free health insurance?

Expanding Medicaid under Obamacare is not the New Hampshire way to make health care more affordable or accessible for anyone.