



September 26, 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid
The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders Reid and McConnell:

We urge you to reject H.R. 2668, Authority for Mandate Delay Act, as passed by the House of Representatives, which would delay the effective date of the individual mandate under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act by one-year. We particularly oppose linking this bill to either government shutdown or debt ceiling talks.

We oppose this effort for two reasons. First, the ACA has nothing to do with the debt ceiling or the continuing resolution and has no business being part of negotiations that could determine the economic future of the nation.

Second, the proposed individual mandate delay would succeed only in punishing the middle and working classes of America with higher coverage rates. Delay will drive up the cost of premiums for small businesses and individuals because those insurance pools would have fewer healthy people. It will encourage people without insurance to wait until they're sick to buy it. It will make it more expensive to cover people with pre-existing conditions – one of the central promises of the legislation. We should be helping these Americans, not hurting them.

Proponents of the delay are not only hurting the middle class, they are transparently playing politics. Efforts like H.R. 2668 are merely political stunts designed to obscure the ongoing theatrics to repeal the ACA. They are not serious efforts to mend the ACA as President Obama did when he called for more time to work out the implementation of the employer mandate. The individual mandate is ready to go now and is critical to the stability and security of the middle class.

Once upon a time, it was Republicans who dreamed up and embraced the individual mandate. Their presidential candidate put the first individual mandate in place in Massachusetts in 2006. Their biggest think tank, the Heritage Foundation, supported the idea dating back to 1989. The individual mandate was a good idea in 1989, 2006, and it remains so today. The only thing that has changed is the people now in charge of the party.

Congress should set aside partisan attempts to kill a law that is here to stay, that helps middle income people, and that is completely irrelevant to budget negotiations.

Very truly yours,



Jim Kessler
Senior Vice President for Policy