



Exposing the Anti-Obamacare Sabotage Campaign

Tony Carrk September 2013

Introduction and summary

Since the Affordable Care Act, or ACA—commonly referred to as Obamacare—was signed into law in March 2010, its opponents have tried everything they can to undo it at both the federal and state levels. Their motivations are clear: Not only do they dislike the law, but they are also afraid of the consequences of it working the way it should. A successful law that provides millions of Americans with access to health care, better benefits, and lower costs undermines these opponents’ extreme conservative ideology. The effort to undermine the law is a sabotage campaign, plain and simple.

This report intends to expose the sabotage campaign in its many forms. Some methods of sabotage are obvious; other methods are more stealth. All of these methods, however, have one purpose: to make implementing Obamacare impossible, and thereby stop people from gaining access to better health coverage at more-affordable costs.

The methods of sabotage discussed in this report include:

- How the House of Representatives has voted 41 times to repeal or dismantle the Affordable Care Act
- How federal lawmakers have used intimidation to keep people from educating the public about the law and hinder those who enroll members of the public
- How Georgia Insurance Commissioner Ralph Hudgens, for example, said he would do anything he could to be an Obamacare “obstructionist”
- How 22 states have refused to expand Medicaid, putting access to health coverage at risk for millions of Americans
- How 27 states decided not to run their own state marketplace, instead forcing the federal government to step in

- How six states informed the federal government that they would not be enforcing the consumer protections of the law, including stopping insurers from denying coverage based on a preexisting condition
- How 16 states have imposed their own regulations on navigators. The restrictions vary, and some have the effect of making it near impossible for organizations to enroll residents in the new marketplaces.
- How some states have prohibited officials and navigators from even talking about the benefits of the law with residents
- How some states want to make it a felony to enforce or implement the Affordable Care Act

As Thomas Mann of the Brookings Institution said:

There has been a full-court press from Day One from the opposition to characterize and demonize the [Affordable Care Act.] The campaign against the law after it was enacted, the range of steps taken, the effort to delegitimize it—it is unprecedented. We'd probably have to go back to the nullification efforts of the Southern states in the pre-Civil War period to find anything of this intensity.¹

It is unfortunate that many conservatives are resorting to a sabotage campaign to refight old political battles, but this is not the only possible approach. A better approach would be for Congress and state lawmakers—regardless of where they stood when it was passed—to work together to make the Affordable Care Act work as well as possible. Even among those who oppose the law, a majority wants to see elected officials work together to make it work.² The Affordable Care Act is the law of the land. There will undoubtedly be bumps in the road and problems that arise, but we can identify and fix them.

On this approach, the evidence is clear: In those states where lawmakers are working together to implement the law, the law is working. Implementing the Affordable Care Act will be a serious undertaking and will require all of us to do our part, but the country—and millions of Americans—will be better off for it.

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