

Thinktanks Weigh In On Healthcare

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Recently, I had the good fortune to attend an event sponsored by The Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF). They had brought the best minds together from across the country for a morning of conversation regarding potential solutions to a pressing problem for Texas and all of the nation. I'd like to focus first on the content, followed by my own humble conclusions.

The Honorable Arlene Wohlgemuth was our moderator to the event. She is the Executive Director of the Foundation's Center for Health Care Policy. It was made clear we were there, not only for an update on healthcare, but to specifically focus on state solutions. The first speaker introduced was Speaker of the House, David Clark from Utah.

Utah has implemented a healthcare solution for their state. It is focused on being patient centric. Their state identified the healthcare challenges a few years ago (this was prior to the Obama administration). The next step was to develop a vision of a healthcare system to resolve problems *and* make it cost effective for the consumers. It is now 2010 and the people of Utah have a very real example of what can be accomplished at state level. The most salient point offered was unique solutions would be required for each of the states. The states are unique and their demographics reflect different cultures and customs. Utah had developed a cost effective approach which resolved their list of challenges. There is no individual mandate nor is there a mandate for employers. Clearly a state should have the right to implement such a plan. The government role is market facilitator in the Utah solution. The healthcare system in Utah began by offering private sector reforms. This will be followed by reform of the public sector. There is also a risk adjustment mechanism. The Utah system is a free market system. Here is the link, to this most remarkable solution: <http://www.exchange.utah.gov/>

The next speaker was the esteemed Michael Cannon from Cato Institute. His focus in this discussion was about the real cost of Obamacare. There are several different prices being discussed with regard to the Healthcare Reform Law. We are talking about the price now and the price of the new healthcare reform bill in the future. Until we repeal Obamacare, nothing will make a difference. The unfunded mandate on the taxpayer is the largest in history. The tax credits are a temporary reprieve and will only help a very small percentage of the population. With each day that passes, there are more disturbing financial facts that are coming to light about this law. Mr. Cannon had many excellent points about the economic trouble, this bill is likely to call if it is not repealed. For more from Michael Cannon, I refer you to this interview he gave on CSpan about Obamacare: http://www.cato.org/mediahighlights/index.php?highlight_id=1292

The final speaker of the morning was Edmund Haislmaier. Heritage had riveting observations about the anomalies of this situation. Medicaid will have many disruptions generated by Obamacare. Expanding coverage to everyone comes at a great cost to business owners and individuals. Benefit costs will necessarily go up due to the mandates and increased numbers of people that do not contribute via taxes. Small business will be better off paying the penalties and dropping the coverage. Standards of coverage will be dropped dramatically beginning at 64 yrs of age. Quote Edmund Haislmaier: "Clearly ignorance and incompetence have ruled this entire process. Harry Reid never meant this particular piece of legislation to be the final option; it is not the sane response".

The people at Federal level complemented Massachusetts and they are a failure. The Feds knew nothing about it. Utah is successful in their efforts and they did not look at it. It is all about doing it the Federal way.

What is the solution to this obvious debacle?

We need to repeal the thing, period. Do what we can for insurance independence quickly! Mr. Haislmaier recommended a benchmark analysis for Texas as soon as possible. Identify what the world will look like pre-obamacare and post Obamacare. The most prudent choice will be the one designed specifically for a Texas solution. The process would be to identify, measure, and pushback via the use of state legislation. For more indepth healthcare information by Edmund Haislmaier, please go to this website: <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2010/04/State-Health-Care-Reform-An-Update-on-Utahs-Reform>

What I learned at this event, was simple. People need to develop a framework in their respective states to identify the problems. Put together a meaningful benchmark using a state solution and compare it to Obamacare. The next step is to use legislation to implement the laws which would further enable a state solution based on the needs of the people. This would provide the greatest protection against the intrusion of Obamacare.

In my humble opinion, this event was without peer. The Texas Public Policy Foundation is a rare gem that deserves our support for it's continued growth. Please have a look at the TPPF: <http://www.texaspolicy.com/>

"How can limited government and fiscal restraint be equated with lack of compassion for the poor? How can a tax break that puts a little more money in the weekly paychecks of working people be seen as an attack on the needy? Since when do we in America believe that our society is made up of two diametrically opposed classes—one rich, one poor—both in a permanent state of conflict and neither able to get ahead except at the expense of the other? Since when do we in America accept this alien and discredited theory of social and class warfare? Since when do we in America endorse the politics of envy and division?"

Ronald Reagan

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Clear and concise. We need to hear the conclusions the thinkers have come to. I hope TX is busy preparing our cost analysis and plan.

Mary Cook

[June 1, 2010](#)



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