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Southwest Missouri reacts to health care vote

By Crystal Thomas cthomas@joplinglobe.com May 4, 2017



JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — After struggling back and forth, U.S. Rep. Billy Long, R-Mo., voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with the American Health Care Act on Thursday.

When the first plan was introduced a month ago, Long was a vocal supporter, telling the Globe that his constituents were calling for the removal of Obamacare. After the first plan never made it to a vote, a revised version fell short of Long's standards.

Two days ago, Long spokesperson Hannah Smith told the Globe that Long was not in favor of the plan drawn up to appease resistant members of the House Freedom Caucus. Because the plan allowed states to opt out of a mandate that kept insurance companies from charging more to customers with pre-existing conditions, Smith said, Long planned to vote against it. Those customers would be moved to a "high-risk" pool.

Long went along with a fellow Republican lawmaker, Rep. Fred Upton, R-Mich., to voice his concerns directly to President Donald Trump. From the meeting came the Upton-Long amendment, which added \$8 billion to help some of the costs of the high-risk pool. Long was on board.

"I promised my constituents I would repeal and replace this disastrous law, and today I made good on that promise," Long said in a statement after the vote. "After seven long years of skyrocketing premiums, limited choices and government overreach, it's time the American people decide what's best for them instead of the government."

Another U.S. representative whose district dips into Southwest Missouri voted for the bill as well. Rep. Vicky Hartzler, R-Mo., was ecstatic after the vote, posting a video to her Twitter account.

"I've heard from constituents for many years now how Obamacare is hurting them and their families," Hartzler said. The American Health Care Act, she said, "has a lot of good things, including, most importantly, more patient choice and affordable premiums."

The true cost of the bill is unknown. The Congressional Budget Office did not have enough time to score the bill before the vote. In the first iteration of the plan, 24 million people were expected to lose coverage by 2026.

Krista Stark, executive director of the Southwest Missouri Democrats, expressed her concern that \$8 billion wouldn't be enough to cover all those with pre-existing conditions. Stark said her organization had words of congratulation at the ready to be blasted out over their servers when it seemed like Long would not vote for the bill.

"It feels like a betrayal," Stark said, of Long's "yes" vote.

She and others plan to protest outside of Long's Joplin office on East 32nd Street from noon to 1 p.m. Friday. The organization's next push is to appeal to Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo.

"We would love anyone who has a pre-existing condition or anyone who is angry for (Long's) change in vote, or anyone that wants to send a message to Sen. Blunt to join us," Stark said.

According to St. Louis Public Radio, Blunt told a group of Missouri reporters during a conference call: "Well, I think there's a number of things that can be done without the repeal-and-replace legislation. I am for the concept of 'Let's get moving here as quickly as we can,' but through administrative, not legislative, actions."

Dottie Elbert, Joplin's regional director with Missouri Healthcare for All, said her organization also had people call Long to thank him for his original vote. The tenor of their calls quickly changed, she said. She said she's hoping to have an in-district meeting with Long about why she finds the bill lacking.

"I think they need to slow down and see what they are looking at," Elbert said. "This (Upton-Long) amendment is not enough to cover people with pre-existing conditions."

Elbert also pointed to figures from the Kaiser Family Foundation that showed that premiums would go up while plans don't have the same essential benefits mandated by Obamacare.

"We are all going to end up paying more for less," Elbert said. "Missouri already has a tight budget, and future cuts are going to be made, and I think it's to Medicaid programs and our most vulnerable."

Joplin resident Penny Hagedorn, 63, said she's going to join Friday's protest.

"Even if I didn't have pre-existing conditions, I would be totally against legislation that didn't cover them," Hagedorn said.

Back in 2009, Hagedorn got a screening because she was genetically predisposed to the same aneurysm that killed her father. She was in the hospital room when his abdominal aortic aneurysm burst, and she didn't want the same to happen to her. Hagedorn's mother had also died of a brain aneurysm.

"I about lost it," Hagedorn said, when she got the letter in the mail, at age 55, that she had an aneurysm.

Hagedorn said she has had three surgeries to widen her arteries to alleviate the pressure on her aneurysm. Each year she gets a CAT scan and sonogram.

Currently, as a retired teacher, she pays \$600 a month for insurance.

"If they don't cover my CT scans or my sonogram, I can't afford to have those done," Hagedorn said of her insurance.

Hagedorn was also worried about a measure in the House bill that would allow insurers to charge seniors five times more than what they charge young people. Hagedorn said she's relieved that she can access Medicare soon, when she turns 65.

"Why are we doing this to people? I know women that have had breast cancer," Hagedorn said. "I'm more upset for everybody else than I am me."

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Rhonda Mccauley from Facebook 4 days ago The rich get richer once again...no surprise. I for one

Like Reply

Rhonda Mccauley from Facebook 4 days ago I will finish my comment...I for one am not going to pay more just because I have health issue. Pay alot now & struggle so will be forced as many others to drop insurance all together just because can't afford to even go to doctor on regular basis...why pay it if you can't afford to use it. America has gotten to be an expensive place to live. Poor just get poorer.

Like Reply

Josh Dorris from Facebook 4 days ago Oh so you enjoyed paying penalties and being forced to buy a product against your will. When liberals don't get thier way it's like a three year old begging for a toy at walmart...

Like Reply



Sue McRae from Facebook

4 days ago

Not to mention people had there hour's cut and most had to work another job to make up for the hours lost and to pay for their own insurance that they were forced to have. It's an epic fail

Like Reply



John Jackson from Facebook

4 days ago

Goober Billy Long did indeed vote for death panels. There's an ongoing snipe hunt for his next town hall. 2-Chicken-2-Debate too.

Like Reply



Kathy Lutman from Facebook

4 days ago

yep, the rich will do very well, the poor will die

Like Reply



Brenda Kirkup from Facebook

4 days ago

Bellingham with only vote how he was told to vote I don't believe he's smart enough to vote for anything that might help the people that put him in office but I think it's time for him to go and never step foot I'm sure he probably has a pre-existing some kind of sickness well if nothing else is right that he couldn't ever get insurance any place else what a piece of blank

1 Like Reply



Teresa Loffer from Facebook

4 days ago

I hope the Trump voters are happy. Especially the morons who really thought he won't repeal that

Like Reply



Teresa Loffer from Facebook

4 days ago

He's a Republican so you get what you vote for.

Like Reply



Gene Rothman from Facebook

4 days ago

Where was the outrage when the speaker of the house said you can read the bill after it passes referring to the academy whichever passed on party lines

Like Reply



Ray France from Facebook

4 days ago

Vote long out as soon as possible !

Like Reply



Larry Martin from Facebook

4 days ago

The problem is is that these senators make enough money they don't have to worry about insurance. They are self-insured. So for the rest of the country not to have any insurance it doesn't bother them.

Like Reply



Kathy Lutman from Facebook

4 days ago

you could not have said it any more correctly. So True

Like Reply



Henry Haywood from Facebook

4 days ago

\U0001f438billy long looks like a toad in a suit

Like Reply



Colby Webb from Facebook

5 days ago

Screw the ACA and screw all government mandated health care. When health insurance was a free market item the prices were more affordable. Last damned time I checked this was America and we were free to choose what we wanted. All the protesters and hacks should get their asses back to work and earn a check it is likely to be more damned productive.

Like Reply



Brandon Doss from Facebook

4 days ago

Words of someone with a small worldview.

1 Like Reply

Colby Webb from Facebook

4 days ago



Words of a by God American Soldier. I have seen health care on the free market at 65 a week for me and mine and I have seen Obama care at 1700.00 a month for me and mine.

Like Reply



Colby Webb from Facebook

4 days ago

Dont like my words dont read them. Your response isnt required or needed to validate me or my rights.

Like Reply



Mary Crane from Facebook

4 days ago

Colby Webb I agree with that part the prices were going higher and higher and that needs fixed now. But by repealing the whole thing a lot of people who can't work because of a legitimate illness won't be able to get health care at all. Not all of them are freeloaders and they need help. Thank you for your service it shows you love America.

Like Reply



Colby Webb from Facebook

4 days ago

I understand about illness and disabilities and there were already programs out there for those. Not the best but they were and those should have been fixed instead of the government mandating health care because when they did that it gave insurance the ability to screw everyone worse with ridiculous prices

Like Reply



Teresa Loffer from Facebook

4 days ago

You weren't even around when the healthcare was a free market place so get over yourself

1 Like Reply



Teresa Loffer from Facebook

4 days ago

This is the only healthcare system in the world that cost so much and give so little. Single-payer works

Like Reply



Terry Van Hooser from Facebook

4 days ago

Teresa Loffer Up until (I believe it was) 1973, healthcare could not be PROFITABLE in the U.S.A. Then Congress signed the Health Maintenance Organization Act of 1973. <https://thecriticalaye.com/2011/08/31/skyrocketing-health-care-costs-thanks-president-nixon/>

Like Reply



Rob Ketron from Facebook

5 days ago

I bet he's one of the GOP that didn't even read it before he voted on it. Got the word Obama in it - can't be for that- now that Affordable Care Act? That's something we should just work on but that Obama thingy it's gotta go!!!! Dumbasses!!!

Like Reply



Laura Susan Nicholas Schwab from Facebook

5 days ago

I will congratulate him when he is voted OUT of office.

Like Reply



Terry Owens from Facebook

5 days ago

of course those that make the laws don't have to follow it.

Like Reply



Amanda Bearden from Facebook

5 days ago

Quite ridiculous! Not at all representative of his constituents! But then again, since he never meets with us, how would he know?

Like Reply



Georgianna Waters Diener from Facebook

5 days ago

SHAME ON BILLY LONG ! he sold his voters out ! Trumpcare is for the healthy and wealthy ...Trumpcare is not for the sick with pre-existing conditions ..

1 Like Reply



Cindie Meek from Facebook

5 days ago

Don't you mean Obamacare? Most people I know can't afford 800 a month and 10 thousand deductable

Like Reply

Georgianna Waters Diener from Facebook

5 days ago



ACA needs fixed no doubt about that ! Now fix it ...Don't send Healthcare backward ...We have to protect the sick with pre -existing conditions ...Trumpcare does not do that ..

Like Reply



Georgianna Waters Diener from Facebook

4 days ago

Terry ACA is better then people losing everything over greedy insurance company's refusing to insure people with pre-existing conditions and leaving them to die .. That what we dealt with before ACA .. every human deserve the same Healthcare no matter what there income ..Universal Healthcare ...This is people's lives ...Fix the ACA don't throw it out for Trumpcare witch is even worse ...

Like Reply



Adam Berkowicz from Facebook

5 days ago

If you all are serious about getting rid of Long, the work has to get started now. Personally, I think Joshua J Lockwood should lead the charge.

Like Reply



Jeff McClellan from Facebook

5 days ago

First useful thing Billy long has done.

Like Reply



Janae Spencer from Facebook

5 days ago

Bye-bye Billy...you just committed political suicide. Well deserved at that!

Like Reply



Jesse Drumeller from Facebook

5 days ago

These guys must think they vote one another into office! Bye billy

Like Reply



Tommy Carpenter from Facebook

5 days ago

Wonder how much he got paid?

Like Reply



Wil Kimbrel from Facebook

5 days ago

Cupcakes. The answer is cupcakes.

Like Reply



Tommy Carpenter from Facebook

5 days ago

Yeah that's what he needs. Lol

Like Reply



Greg Mckinney from Facebook

5 days ago

Billy Long is a spineless partisan hack. No excuses. Vote his arse out.

1 Like Reply



Ron Coquillette from Facebook

5 days ago

Lol Mo. is all red.

Like Reply



Greg Mckinney from Facebook

5 days ago

Yeah idc...vote for another Republican. Long has to go.

Like Reply



Josh Long from Facebook

5 days ago

The GOP would vote for the devil himself if he had a pro life bumper sticker on his gun rack in lifted truck as long as he (rarely she) had that R behind their name.

Like Reply



Peyton Peacock from Facebook

5 days ago

Mo is all red because people like you keep voting against their own best interests.

Like Reply



Kay Wiele from Facebook

4 days ago

Payton Peacock from what I have seen of the Missouri republican representatives, they are only in it to line their pockets & don't care what their constituents want.

Like Reply



Mary Crane from Facebook

4 days ago

Greg Mckinney That is what I tried to do in the primary. Get another Republican. It did not work so I voted Democrat. He has GOT to go!!!

Like Reply

This Week's Circulars



Joplin Globe Events

WED 10 **Jeff Tatum Band live on the patio**
Creekside Grill | Joplin, MO

WED 10 **Wednesday Night Jam**
Blondies Inked | Joplin, MO

WED 10 **Student Ministry: Small Groups**
Central City Chris... | Joplin, MO

WED 10 **Central OK: 5/10 Baseball vs MIAA To...**
Joplin, MO



[Mom Gives Birth to Quadruplets. Then Doctors Notice The Baby](#)

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Crystal Thomas



