

Health Care

OVERVIEW

Providing quality health care benefits is a top priority for ABC and its member companies. Throughout the health care reform debate, ABC advocated for policies that reduce the cost of health care for employers and their employees. ABC called on Congress to advance common-sense proposals that would address the skyrocketing costs of health insurance, especially for employer-sponsored plans and the rapidly rising number of uninsured Americans. ABC believes true reform should provide greater choice and affordability and allow private insurers to compete for business.

Unfortunately, the massive and complex health care law, known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), does not effectively address any of those issues. Costs have not been lowered and costly new mandates and taxes have been imposed on an important but struggling sector of the economy: small businesses. Small business owners have watched insurance premiums increase or have had their plans discontinued, forcing some to purchase more expensive policies or drop their coverage.

Additionally, ABC has expressed concerns about the regulatory burdens imposed by the massive health care law. The outcomes of many of the health care-related federal rulemakings are currently unclear, creating an environment of uncertainty in our industry that makes it difficult for firms to adequately plan for the future.

ABC urges Congress to repeal the massive health care law that has only served to hurt small businesses and increase premiums for millions of Americans.

ABC SUPPORTS

- **Allowing Americans to buy insurance across state lines.** This would be particularly helpful to those who work in the construction industry, as the unique nature of construction work demands that benefits be portable.
- **A tax deduction for the self-employed and for employers.** ABC supports raising the self-employed health care deduction to 100 percent and maintaining the tax deductibility of health insurance premiums for all employers.
- **Small Business Health Plans (SBHPs).** SBHPs give small businesses the power to pool together to offer health care at lower prices—something many corporations and labor unions already are permitted to do.
- **Health Savings Accounts (HSAs).** HSAs are tax-free savings accounts for medical expenses that allow more small business owners to obtain affordable health coverage for themselves and their employees. ABC supports expanding access to high-deductible health plans and HSAs, as well as increasing HSA contribution limits.
- **Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA).** FSAs, or “cafeteria plans,” allow employees to set aside money (pre-tax) each year to be used for medical expenses such as co-pays, deductibles and services not covered under their base insurance plan. If an employee does not use all of the money contributed to his or her FSA by the end of the plan year, the remaining amount is forfeited to the employer. This limitation should be changed to allow workers to take control of their health care costs and plan for the future.
- **Health IT.** ABC supports advancing the widespread adoption of health information technology. Technology holds the promise of improving the quality of patient care, enhancing access to care, reducing medical errors and reducing health care costs.
- **Medical malpractice reform.** Unnecessary and frivolous lawsuits contribute to the increasing cost of insurance. Enacting tort reform will dramatically decrease the cost of health insurance for the American public.

ABC OPPOSES

- **Employer mandates.** New government mandates that force employers to provide health care or pay a hefty fine for not being able to do so will stifle small businesses. A mandated level of coverage also will result in direct premium increases, making insurance more expensive for employers and employees.
- **Tax increases.** At a time when the unemployment rate in the construction industry exceeds 17 percent, massive tax increases will only further decimate the industry and the craft professionals it employs.