

**ksl.com** Bill would allow Utah to opt out of federal health care reform


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By Randall Jeppesen



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Randall Jeppesen reporting

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"This is a tough, real bill that has real results," says Wimmer. "There are some that say we are picking a fight. We are not picking a fight, we are just finally fighting back."

Not everyone feels that way. A group of health care advocates led by Judy Hillman with the Utah Health Policy Project brought business owners, Medicaid recipients and others to the Capitol Thursday to voice their concerns over the bill.

Hillman says if the bill passes, it sets the groundwork for the federal government to pull Utah's Medicaid funding, leaving thousands of Utahns without any form of health coverage.

"We are playing with fire and if we go in that direction the state could have blood on its hands," Hillman says.

The mother of Bridger Hunt, a boy severely injured by a homemade explosive device in 2008, is among those worried about the bill. She says Bridger can walk today because of the medical treatment she was able to get for her son through a Medicaid program.

Wimmer says the talk over Medicaid being pulled is simply a fear tactic, and says the states need to stop being pushed around by federal mandates attached to federal money.

"The states have been the lap dog of the federal government forever," says Wimmer. "Us stepping on a few toes right now is something that I'm proud to do."

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