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[What Does Federal Health Reform Opt-Out Mean for People on Medicaid?](#)

02.12.2010 by [Elizabeth Ziegler](#)



Representative
Carl Wimmer

(KCPW News) Utah is one step closer to picking a fight with the federal government by opting out of national health care reform. The Utah House passed Republican Representative Carl Wimmer's proposal Thursday after the Democrats' attempt to modify the bill failed. Asked whether he's concerned about the lengthy legislative note, warning it could be found unconstitutional and jeopardize the state's Medicaid funding, Wimmer said he wears it "as a badge of honor."

"The fact is if this country goes down the path that we are being led by Congress, I believe more lives will be in jeopardy. More lives have been lost due to socialized medicine than will ever be lost in the free market health care that we have in this country," said Wimmer.

Wimmer's House Bill 67, titled "Health System Amendments," was expanded on the House floor to address the possibility Congress will expand eligibility for Medicaid and CHIP. He argued this could cost the state an additional \$300 million as it already faces a massive budget shortfall.

But refusing to comply with federal health policy could leave the state's roughly 260,000 Medicaid recipients without an affordable health care option. That's devastating news to Jennifer Fillmore, a Salt Lake City mother of an autistic teenage son. She says without Medicaid, her family would be forced to spend more than a thousand dollars a month for doctors' visits.

"Every person in this room is affected by this bill in some form or another — by a neighbor, or a friend or an immediate family member. Autism affects a lot of people, and it is a preexisting condition," she said. "Without some help from Medicaid it would cripple families."

The bill passed out of the House of Representatives on a 53 to 20 vote. Only one Democrat, Representative Neal Hendrickson of West Valley City, voted for it. The bill now heads to the Senate for consideration.

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-  **Jeff** [February 12th, 2010 at 9:22 am](#)

The obvious ignorance of our legislature is infuriating! To not do health care reform is to doom the state and the nation to ongoing insurmountable debt. The current health care system is broken and bankrupting individuals and the nation alike. The state is already in a budget crisis and now they want to engage the federal government in a costly court battle and risk losing the funding we have for our community's most needy populations? This is irresponsible and incredibly narrow minded. It seems that our representatives are willing to throw us under the bus for short term political gains. That they are more invested in picking fights along party lines than caring for the people they were elected to represent.

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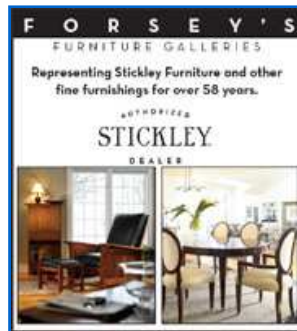
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