

**For Immediate Release:** Contact: Chandler Smith

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**Sens. Vitter, Enzi, Heller to Introduce Legislation to Stop a Washington Exemption from Obamacare**

*Congressmen DeSantis and Ross introduce companion bill in the U.S. House of Representatives*

**(Washington, D.C.)** – U.S. Sens. David Vitter (R-La.), Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.) and Dean Heller (R-Nev.) will be introducing legislation to reverse and clarify the decision by the Office of Personnel and Management (OPM) on Obamacare. Their legislation will require that all Members of Congress, the President, Vice President, and all political appointees in the Administration must purchase their health insurance on the Obamacare Exchange without the help of taxpayer-funded subsidies. Congressional staff would be prohibited from receiving any contribution greater than what they would receive if they were not employed by a congressional office. Congressmen Ron DeSantis (R-Fla.) and Dennis Ross (R-Fla.) are introducing companion legislation in the House of Representatives today and will also offer it as an amendment to House Continuing Resolution.

“These recent maneuverings inside the beltway are precisely why the American people rightly despise Congress,” **Vitter** said. “Our legislation gets right to the core of the OPM ‘fix’ and says we won’t allow a Washington exemption from Obamacare. The House should include Rep. DeSantis’s legislation in their Continuing Resolution this week, and we’ll work to get it passed in the Senate.”

“I was in Wyoming for most of August and part of this month holding listening sessions and meeting with folks. People were angry that Congress gets some exemptions from Obamacare that they don’t,” said **Enzi**. “Not only Congress, but the president and the Administration should live under the same rules they are forcing on the American people. Delays, exemptions, special treatment is the name of the game with this massively complex and onerous new law, but it’s no game. This is people’s health care and they deserve fairness. This bill will help them get it.”

“It’s simple. Members of Congress, their staff, and the Administration must play by the same rules as the American taxpayer. Those who are responsible for crafting and passing ObamaCare, including Committee and Leadership congressional staff, should be subject to the law as well. I am pleased to join Senators Vitter and Enzi in this legislation, which will take much needed steps to clarify this issue,” said **Heller**.

On August 2, immediately after Congress adjourned the Office of Personnel Management, under heavy pressure from Congressional leaders, announced they will issue regulations saying that the government can continue to make the employer contribution to the health plans of congressional members and staff.

The Vitter-Enzi legislation will clarify eligibility for subsidies and employer contribution for members and their staff under Obamacare. Pursuant of the recent proposed rule, a legislative fix is needed to prevent lawmakers and their staff from getting special treatment under the law. Absent these legislative changes, Congress and the administration are essentially shielded from higher costs, limited access, and more confusion.

The legislation will do the following:

* Clarifies that members do not have the authority to define "official staff" and can thereby not exempt any of their staff from going into the exchange (current Senate rules and the OPM proposal gives discretion to the individual offices).
* Clarifies that Members of Congress, all staff, President, Vice President, and political appointees are no longer eligible for Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan (FEHBP) and must go into the exchange.
* Prohibits Members, political appointees, President and Vice President from receiving tax-payer funded contributions in the form of subsidies, tax credits, or employer contribution to purchase insurance on the exchange- as in most of these cases they earn well above the maximum income ($43,000 individual/$92,000 family) and would otherwise be ineligible for subsidies or tax credits as defined in the statute.

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