



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on September 13, 2011

New York Republicans Stall Implementation of ObamaCare Exchanges

One might expect such resistance in more conservative states such as [Oklahoma](#) and [Florida](#) — but in New York, a state that went nearly two-to-one for Obama in 2008 and has a popular Democratic Governor? It's true. According to the [New York Times](#), Republicans in Albany are doing their level best to see to it that the Empire State does not accept federal grants to establish an insurance exchange — despite the fact that failure to set up an exchange could precipitate federal intervention to create one and deprive the state of federal dollars to get it started.



The Newspaper of Record recaps the situation thus:

Although Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo proposed creating the insurance exchange, and the State Assembly, with a Democratic majority, approved it, the Republican-controlled Senate refused to take it up before the Legislature adjourned its regular session at the end of June. Now, Republican lawmakers are balking at returning to Albany to consider the matter, as deadlines pass, and Mr. Cuomo, despite an unexpectedly harmonious relationship with Senate Republicans, appears to be unwilling to force the issue at this time.

“The question isn't whether to have a special session,” said Josh Vlasto, a spokesman for Mr. Cuomo. “The question is, do we reach an agreement? And that remains the question.”

Agreement does not seem likely at this time, in part because Republicans are arguing for more time to consider the matter. The bill passed the Assembly in the waning days of the legislative session, and “several Senate Republicans insisted that carrying out the federal health care law deserved a more extended discussion than was possible in the final 48 hours of the legislative session,” the *Times* writes. Even in the Assembly there was significant concern about the bill, with some asking whether ObamaCare includes “[death panels](#)” and Republican Assemblyman Al Graf flatly stating, “I will not support forcing a back-door form of ObamaCare upon the people of this state.”

While Graf's stance appears principled enough, it is undeniable that some Republicans are stalling as a matter of partisanship. Says the paper:

State Senator Gregory R. Ball of Putnam County described his resistance as his duty as a Republican.

“I would fight very vociferously to make sure that we're not seen as implementing and expediting Obamacare,” Mr. Ball said. And then, noting hopefully that President Obama could lose his re-election bid to a Republican who opposes the health care overhaul, he added, “We could be looking at a change of administrations.”



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New York has already received \$39 million from the federal government to begin planning its exchange. Passing the bill to create the exchange would make the state eligible for \$50 million to \$100 million more, but the bill must be passed before one of the quarterly deadlines to receive financing for that quarter. New York will certainly miss the September 30 deadline and will also miss the December 30 deadline if legislators do not return for a special session by the end of the year. That will leave just two more quarters, ending in March and June of 2012, for the state to pass a bill and receive grants.

Moreover, if the state fails to set up an exchange to Washington's liking by 2013, the feds can step in and set up the exchange themselves. "Some New York Republicans," the *Times* observes, "have argued that the so-called deadlines mean little, and do not justify taking action without more debate."

The Empire State is not alone in taking its time to implement the insurance exchanges. Thus far "only 13 states have approved legislation to set up exchanges," notes the *Times*, with "more than a dozen states" having introduced "bills to that end" but not passing them. However, the failure of a large state with a generally favorable political climate to establish an exchange could be a harbinger of a nationwide rejection of ObamaCare — and the President and party that enacted it.

"This has got to set of [sic] some very loud alarm bells in the White House," Rutgers University political science professor Ross K. Baker told the *Gray Lady*. "With a state as visible as New York, for the exchange to be obstructed is a very ominous sign for the ultimate implementation of the Affordable Care Act."

Republicans in Albany, whether out of principle or out of partisanship, ought to stick to their guns and refuse to entangle their state with the unconstitutional monstrosity of ObamaCare any more than absolutely necessary. With any luck, they may be able both to persuade some of their fellow lawmakers from across the aisle to join them and also to inspire other states to stand up to Washington. The more resistance to ObamaCare, and the more varied the resistance, the greater the chances of nullifying or repealing it.

Photo: New York State Capitol Building



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