



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on August 2, 2011

Sunshine State Snubs ObamaCare Simoleons

“I don’t want to waste either federal money or state money on something that’s unconstitutional,” Scott told the [New York Times](#) in a recent interview.

Likewise, state Rep. Matt Hudson, Chairman of the Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee, said, “I do not believe that act is the right thing for the country or the right thing for Florida, and I am not going to start implementing things that I don’t believe in.”

The Gray Lady details the results of these officials’ principled stand against ObamaCare:



In recent months, either Gov. Rick Scott’s administration or the state’s Republican-controlled Legislature has rejected grants aimed at moving long-term care patients into their homes, curbing child abuse through in-home counseling and strengthening state regulation of health premiums. They have shunned money to help sign up eligible recipients for Medicare, educate teenagers on preventing pregnancy and plan for the health insurance exchanges that the law requires by 2014.

While 36 states shared \$27 million to counsel health insurance consumers, Florida did not apply for the grants. And in drafting this year’s budget, the Legislature failed to authorize an \$8.3 million federal grant won by a county health department to expand community health centers....

In distancing itself from the law, Florida declined to participate in a Medicaid pilot program that would have authorized up to \$2 million in reimbursement to providers using a new hospice model for severely ill children. The state insurance commissioner applied to the Obama administration for a waiver from this year’s requirement that health insurers spend at least 80 percent of premium revenue on medical care. Only at the last minute did the State Health Department agree to provide required letters of support for community groups applying for federal wellness and prevention grants.

In short, when the Governor and state legislative leaders, according to the paper, “said they detested everything about the federal health law” and “had no intention of putting it in place” absent an appellate court order, they were being deadly serious.

Scott wasted no time acting on U.S. District Judge Roger K. Vinson’s January [ruling](#) (later [stayed](#) pending appeal) that the whole of ObamaCare is unconstitutional, putting the kibosh on grant requests initiated by his predecessor and halting preparations for the federally mandated state insurance exchange. The *Times* writes that “Scott said his antipathy toward the exchanges was so strong that he would oppose running” the exchange even though by so doing he may be dooming his state to a federal takeover of its exchange.

Meanwhile, the Speaker of the State House, Dean Cannon, “had a policy that we weren’t going to be implementing any part of health care reform,” his spokeswoman told the newspaper. Thus, the legislature did not apply for grants to expand two health centers and build a third in Osceola County.



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“Critics,” the *Times* notes, “say the state’s Republican leadership has carried its opposition to the health care law too far.” Those critics, it hardly needs pointing out, do not see ObamaCare as a blatant violation of the Constitution. All they see are lost federal dollars: “It’s simply unconscionable that they’re turning back federal tax dollars that our citizens and businesses pay and sending those tax dollars to other states,” said Democratic Rep. Kathy Castor. “Florida’s economy has been hit very hard, and we need every dollar and every job in our state.”

What the critics fail to see — but which should be blindingly obvious given the whole debt ceiling brouhaha — is that Washington is flat broke. In order to pay the \$46.4 million the *Times* says is due the Sunshine State under ObamaCare, the federal government will have to borrow it, burdening future taxpayers even more. (The alternatives, raising taxes or genuinely cutting spending elsewhere, are non-starters inside the Beltway.) The money slated to enter Florida and the jobs that might be generated by it would therefore come at the expense of Americans several years down the road, when a different set of politicians from the ones who created the problem will have to deal with it.

Thus, on prudential grounds alone, not just Florida but all other states should be rejecting federal largess under ObamaCare (as well as other programs). Unfortunately, though a majority of states are suing to overturn the healthcare law and a few have turned down grants, the *Times* writes that many of them “have taken a posture more like that of Idaho, where Gov. C. L. Otter, a Republican, made a show this spring of ordering his agencies not to pursue Affordable Care Act grants and then quickly issued 10 exceptions to that rule.”

Florida, however, may be demonstrating an effective, two-pronged approach to ending ObamaCare: (1) fight it in court and (2) refuse to take any federal money, which inevitably comes with strings attached. The *Times* certainly sees this approach as an attempt at nullification: “Asked whether states had the authority to stymie federal law, Mr. Hudson answered, ‘We’re not required to accept a grant.’”

Constitutionalists must hope that more states follow Florida’s lead and then go even further in cutting their financial ties to Washington. If states begin paying their own bills instead of depending on the federal government, they will well and truly be able to tell Uncle Sam to go jump in the Potomac, in the process restoring their sovereignty, the appropriate balance of power, and their citizens’ liberty.



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