



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 30, 2010

President and Congress Too Good for their own Health Care law?

As if the socialization of health care, and increased taxes to afford it, wasn't enough to make Americans disgruntled, we learn that Obama and other top federal officials are exempt from health care exchanges.

According to Connie Hair of *Human Events*, "Rank-and-file House and Senate staffers will be forced out of the Federal Health Benefit Plan (FEHBP) and into the restricted federal health insurance exchanges, but not the leadership or committee congressional staff or the federal civil service bureaucrats who will be making your health care decisions for you."



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Reid Wilson of *Hotline OnCall* explains, where the legislation relates to members of Congress, it indicates that the federal government can make available to members and their official staffs health plans by the bill or offered through an exchange. However, a subsection of the bill defines a member's staff as "full-time and part-time employees employed by the official office of a Member of Congress, whether in Washington, DC or outside of Washington, DC." The Congressional Research Service (CRS) has interpreted this to mean that the bill does not apply to committee staff or leadership staff, but only to a personal office.

What's worse is that this loophole would have remained concealed had it not been for the work of an anonymous GOP aide. Wilson states that reports by the CRS are confidential unless made public by a member of Congress. (So much for transparency, huh?) The aide provided the information to *Hotline OnCall* on the condition that that he/she would remain anonymous. Several other news sources have caught wind of the story, including *The Washington Times* and *Associated Content*, but it remained relatively unexplored by the mainstream media, yet again.

The Washington Times refers to the definition of "staff" found in the bill as "weasel-worded."

The amendment that protects these employees from Obamacare was introduced by Senate Majority leader Harry Reid back in December. As a result, the President, Vice-President, cabinet members, and thousands of Obama administration staff will remain covered by the FEHBP.

Last year Republican Senator Chuck Grassley spearheaded the effort to ensure that this bill would have to apply to all Americans if passed, but faced opposition from unions who alleged to be in favor of Obamacare. As long as it was not imposed on their own members, of course. In December, Grassley and Republican Senator Tom Coburn attempted to introduce a floor amendment that would invalidate Reid's amendment, but Reid blocked a vote on the proposed amendment. Shocking!

Grassley's motivations for the amendment were simple: "It's only fair and logical that top



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administration officials, who fought so hard for passage of this overhaul of America's health care system, experience it themselves." Apparently, what's good for the goose is not always good for the gander.

One assumes that those who wrote the bill are more familiar with the contents than any other American. Their decision to opt out of the "benefits" provided through the new legislation is telling, to say the least.

Vice President Biden explains that the bill is intended to help "ordinary Americans." Because the lawmakers are so extraordinary, right? *The Washington Times* asserts that "the special exemptions slipped into the health care law are another example of how those statisticians who rule consider themselves a privileged class, imposing burden on the country that they will not accept themselves."

House Republican Conference Secretary John Carter of Texas responds to this double-standard by saying, "If they think this crap is good enough for Joe the Plumber, then it should be good enough for Barack Obama, Rahm Emmanuel, and Tim Geithner."

Overall, Grassley believes that several parts of the health care package are vital and necessary, but that "the bad outweighs the good in this bill." In order for Congress and the President to truly realize the flaws in the legislation, they must experience the effects firsthand. Grassley explains that this loophole sends a message "that the reforms are good enough for you, but not for us. Public officials who make the laws or lead efforts to have laws changed should live under those laws."

As a result, Grassley has introduced a stand-alone bill that would apply the health care law to the President, White House officials, and Congressional staff, called Grassley's Health Reform Accountability Act.

Photo: Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa,; AP Images



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