

January 29, 2020
Committee on Public Health & Welfare
Opponent Testimony to SB 252

Thank you, Chairman Suellentrop and members of the committee, for allowing us to present testimony in opposition to SB 252, on behalf of the members of our five organizations. Together, we geographically represent the various areas of Johnson County and have existed anywhere from 5 to 25 years. We seek to promote the time-honored principles of the Republican Party.

While one of our organizations is organized as a city party of the Republican Party, our organizations are recognized by the state as political action committees. Each of our organizations hosts monthly meetings in which grassroots Republicans come together to hear from speakers and talk about policy. Many of the members of this very legislature have addressed our groups at one time or another.

A common mission among our organizations is that we seek to encourage our members and followers to be engaged in the political process – not just during elections, but also “between elections” when policy is being made. That is what we are doing today. Although our organizations are separate, from time to time we come together for a joint effort that we agree on. This particularly occurs when we see the legislature is on the cusp of doing something very good – or in this case, something very unwise.

SB 252 represents the State of Kansas, after years of resisting pressure to do so, embracing a massive expansion of ObamaCare via Medicaid. The consequences are dire from both a fiscal and moral standpoint. Core tenets of the Republican Party include a belief in limited government; a belief that we should encourage people to work; a belief we should not increase dependency; and a belief that the success of a government welfare program should not be judged by the number of people on the program, but by the number of people not on the program. You may have heard the common phrase, “We believe in a hand up, not a hand out.”

Now, there are some in society that truly cannot help themselves, and that was the original purpose of Medicaid. The sick, the elderly, the disabled, etc. That is something we support. And that is what KanCare currently covers and expanding Medicaid would do nothing to help out those in this category.

What we do not support is expanding this program to able-bodied adults, which is exactly what SB 252 would do. It would push tens of thousands off of private insurance and onto the government dole. It contains no work requirements, conscience protections, or measures to ensure those currently in line for Medicaid get prioritized. SB 252 is essentially the creation of another government entitlement program, when in fact, we need to be looking at ways to contain the cost of entitlements – not creating new ones. Experiences in other states have shown that the costs estimates are woefully low and thus the burden to the taxpayers is dramatically increased, which can eventually lead to tax increases and/or budget cuts.

A decision to pass this bill would also be poorly timed. Currently, a federal lawsuit is once again threatening to derail ObamaCare – in our eyes, that would be a good thing. There are also ongoing efforts in Congress to repeal ObamaCare and replace it with important provisions that would create a true free market health care system. This includes expanding the use of health savings accounts and removing the burdensome regulations that make health insurance so expensive. We should continue to let these policy moves play out before ever even consider expanding ObamaCare in Kansas. Thank you.

Greg Cromer
Chair, Conservative Republicans of Southern Johnson County

Curtis Mullen
Chair, Olathe Republican Party

Tony Gillette
Chair, Northwest Johnson County Republicans

Steve Snitz
Chair, Northeast Johnson County Conservatives

Jacob Swisher
Chair, Conservative Republicans of Western Johnson County