



WisPolitics: Ryan predicts Obamacare will 'collapse under its own weight'

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By Kay Nolan
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Franksville – U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan told a Tea Party meeting in Racine County today that “ObamaCare will collapse under its own weight” and that employers will deliberately discontinue employee health care benefits, causing the program’s costs to balloon out of control.

Ryan said he has already spoken to a major Wisconsin employer that says it is poised to do just that – a move that Ryan calls “competitive dumping.”

Ryan, who would not reveal the company’s name, said it pays about \$17,000 per employee for a family health plan, but its competitors can pay a \$2,000 fine per employee if they do not offer health care.

“It’s a competitive advantage they say they can’t overcome,” Ryan said.

“Don’t think every company is not thinking about it. They’re all thinking about it.”

Ryan predicted health care providers also will rebel.

“Go talk to the people at Aurora, go talk to the people at Wheaton, go talk to the people at St. Catherine’s, go talk to the people at All Saints,” he said. “They will say the same exact thing, which is, ‘We are getting paid less and less per service for all these people coming in.’ You see, the government is underpaying providers for the cost of care.”

Ryan told about 200 people in attendance that opponents of the Obama administration’s Affordable Health Care Act have failed to halt the new legislation in the GOP’s two preferred ways: either by having the Supreme Court strike down the law as unconstitutional or by winning the White House

Now, Ryan said, “This is going to have to be litigated.”

In response to questions from the audience, Ryan said Congress cannot simply “defund” ObamaCare, because the president would need to sign such a measure. But Ryan said he hopes that ObamaCare will fail on its own.

“The architecture of this law is so fundamentally flawed, so contrary to the sphere and the principles of this country, that I just don’t think it can last,” Ryan said.

The former GOP vice presidential candidate made light of his loss in November by noting that he and his wife are fans of the Wisconsin Badgers, the Green Bay Packers, the Notre Dame Fighting Irish and the Oklahoma Sooners.

“We lost the presidential election, we lost the Rose Bowl, we lost the national championships and we got knocked out of the payoffs yesterday,” he said. “Other than that, everything’s going great.”

But when a supporter in the audience asked Ryan, “How do we help you?” he answered wryly, “Boy, you should have asked that two months ago.” Ryan then grinned and said he was kidding.

Also speaking at the event were Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, and state Sen. Leah Vukmir, R-Wauwatosa.

Vos said he gave Gov. Scott Walker credit for declining the state health care exchange under Obamacare, but said a more difficult decision would be whether Wisconsin should decline the federal government’s offer to increase its portion of Medicaid payments from 60 percent to 90 percent.

“That’s still up for debate,” Vos said.

He added his belief that low-income residents in Wisconsin are already adequately covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

“If you’re poor in Wisconsin, we take care of you,” said Vos.

Michael Tanner of the Washington, D.C.-based CATO Institute also spoke, summing up ObamaCare as, “We’ll do what we’re damn well told,” and decried new regulations.

“Insurance companies have to sell you insurance even if you’re already sick, the ban on pre-existing conditions, which is a little bit like being able to drive your car into a tree and picking up the phone and saying, ‘Hey Geico, now’s a good time to buy auto insurance,’” Tanner said.

But Vukmir, a pediatric nurse practitioner, told reporters afterward she supports measures to protect coverage for people with pre-existing conditions. She told the crowd that she will propose legislation demanding more transparency of health care costs by doctors and hospitals, so that consumers can shop around and demand lower prices. She said she also supports allowing residents to buy insurance plans across state lines and subsidies to help people afford to buy health insurance of their choice.

She said she supports Walker’s decision not to create a state health care exchange because otherwise “it won’t be ObamaCare, it will be Scott Walker’s ObamaCare. It would be Scott Walker and the Wisconsin state legislature that would get the blame when it fails.”

Prior to the event, attendees chatted among themselves about topics ranging from gun control to

teachers to abortion. One man, wearing a red cap that read “American patriot” and had a Tea Party button on it, sported a sign around his neck that showed a photo of a lion with the words, “African lion” underneath the photo and a photo of President Barack Obama, with the words, “Lyin’ African.”

Asked about the sign, the man said he firmly believes Obama is not an American citizen, but refused to give his name, and said he was outraged that Obama has withheld his true identity from the American public.

John Hervat of Kenosha wore battery-powered pins that displayed customized messages like a marquee. His said, “Freedom is not free” and “Obamacare makes me sick.” Hervat said he considers himself an independent and does not belong to Tea Party groups, but said he has voted Republican in recent elections, because he worries about too many freedoms being taken away.