

ALERT:Federal Healthcare Legislation Unfairly Targets Only Construction Industry with Harmful Mandate

The latest healthcare bill to pass Congress kicked small business in the teeth to line the pockets of their union allies, Wall Street, trial attorneys and insurance companies. Despite the promises and rhetoric about helping small business, the needs of small employers was largely discarded and forgotten - but this back room deal to target small construction companies and contractors as a payoff to the unions is by far the worst part of Washington's healthcare reform plan. This destructive new mandate was only made public now. It was slipped in under union pressures during late-night deal making by Oregon Senator Jeff Merkley and Majority Leader Harry Reid. The narrowly-focused mandate is an unprecedented assault on the construction industry, and especially to the men and women who own and operate small construction firms.

Under the revised bill, construction companies are forced to provide expensive health coverage or pay penalties if they have more than five (5) employees and a payroll that exceeds \$250,000. All other industries have a firm size exemption of 50 employees or less. The construction industry is specifically targeted by having their exemption taken away. In an industry where the unemployment rate is exceeding 22%, and struggling to overcome historic job losses, this is NOT the reform our state's construction industry needs or can afford. In fact, from the latest Jan 8 job report: 53,000 of the 85,000 jobs lost in December were in construction. If our construction industry continues to have high double digit unemployment, Florida's economy will suffer. Targeting the construction industry puts our entire economy at risk. And, make no mistake, if they do it to construction, they'll come after another industry next.

The Florida Swimming Pool Association has joined with the National Federation of Independent Business/Florida (NFIB), Associated Builders and Contractors of Florida (ABC), the Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC) and others in an effort to call on Florida's Senators and Congressmen to strip this provision from healthcare reform. We are working to be sure Senator Nelson knows about this outrageous provision and how harmful this is to Florida's construction industry. This was a back room deal that will harm small businesses and we need our U.S. Senators to help us stop it.

Click on the links for a copy of the press release and the letter that the coalition is sending to the Florida Congressional Delegation. Recent press conferences in Tallahassee, Tampa, and Orlando have also been held to highlight the need to remove this harmful provision from the bill.