

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Marsha Blackburn
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Hearing on “PPACA Pulse Check”
August 1, 2013**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

As we prepare to return to our districts for the August work period, there is one topic of conversation that will be sure to arise whether I am in Williamson, Montgomery or Henderson County.

Of the folks I hear from most when it comes to Obamacare, I'd say there are two camps – those who aren't quite sure what Obamacare will mean for them and their families, and those who have studied the law and its policies and are opposed to what it will do.

It is the uncertainty of the law that most concerns me.

Uncertainty about how much individual's health insurance costs are going up to comply with the laws mandates and taxes.

Uncertainty about what new and additional expenses employers must take on as a result of the law.

And business uncertainty for the numerous medical device companies that call Tennessee home due to the medical device tax.

It appears you have a lot of work to do by October 1 and the end of the year – so much so that Secretary Sebelius even acknowledged having “very tight deadlines.”

I voted yes on the Fairness for American Families act earlier this month to delay the individual mandate for one year - a mandate supported by just 12 percent of Americans.

Despite being told over and over by the president that “if you like what you have you can keep it” and that health care premiums would go down by an average of \$2,500, individuals in Tennessee are seeing just the opposite.

Based on the exhaustive work by our staff here at committee, our report found that for those in the individual market in Tennessee, premium increases of 49-54 percent could be expected, as well as increases of 35 percent in the small group market.

Unfortunately, these increases should surprise no one. If something is taxed and loaded down with mandates, it's going to be more expensive.

According to a recent Gallup poll, more than 40 percent of small-business owners have frozen hiring.

Another 19 percent have “reduced the number of employees [they] have in [their] business as a specific result of the Affordable Care Act [Obamacare]”

Finally, just nine percent of the over 600 employers surveyed said that Obamacare will be good for their business compared to 48 percent who said it will be bad.

This is why the House voted to join President Obama in delaying the employer mandate reporting requirements earlier this month.

So, Administrator Tavenner, we thank you for coming before us today. We look forward to your testimony and for a chance to expand on some of these issues during question and answer.

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