

Many GOP governors embrace Obamacare, why won't ours?

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By [BOB MARTIN](#), Publisher

Kentucky is a deeply red state with two high-profile Republican senators. So why then is Kentucky — more quickly than almost any other state — moving to implement the Affordable Care Act some Alabama leaders are asking?

Probably, some are saying, because there's a huge disconnect between the rank partisanship of national politics and the outlook of governors whose job it is to help families, strengthen work forces, attract companies and create a balanced budget.

"It's no coincidence that numerous governors — not just Democrats like me but also Republicans like Jan Brewer of Arizona, John Kasich of Ohio and Rick Snyder of Michigan — see the Affordable Care Act not as a referendum on President Obama but as a tool for historic change, says Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear.

This is especially true in Kentucky, a state where residents' collective health has long been horrendous. Recent reports show the state ranks among the worst, if not the worst, in almost every major health category, including smoking, cancer deaths, preventable hospitalizations, premature death, heart disease and diabetes. Sadly this sounds pretty much like Alabama.

So, why does our governor, who is a doctor and should have some concern about the health of the rest of us, if not for himself, react with such disdain when it comes to providing vastly

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improved health care for millions of Alabamians and basic healthcare for hundreds of thousands of our people who have no health insurance at all?

Anyone who has looked at the Obama health care plan without a partisan or racial bias has to be shaking their head.

As the owner of a small business who provides his fulltime employees with company-paid health care I have determined Obamacare will save me thousands of dollars annually and provide basically the same coverage. So frankly, Gov. Bentley I am not happy with your actions which, if successful, would cost business owners across our state thousands of dollars a year which the availability of Obamacare will provide. Even worse, your actions will force the federal government to run our healthcare in Alabama, not our own state government. Funny, some of us thought you were a champion of state's rights. You sure fooled us on that one.

So let's take a look at the numbers our governor is obviously neglecting. A family of four with \$50,000 in annual income would pay \$282 monthly for a mid-range plan after tax credits. After tax credits a 27-year-old with an income of \$25,000 would pay \$98 monthly for the lowest cost plan. Exchange plans will be offered on bronze, silver, gold and platinum levels.

Nationally, Americans will pay an average premium of \$328 per month, The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) said. Federal officials said the premiums will be around 16 percent lower than originally projected. Young adults will have the additional option of low-cost catastrophic or youth plans. They will be able to stay on their parents' family plan until age 27.

Three companies — Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama, Humana and United Healthcare — have applied to offer plans in Alabama.

Alabamians will have an average of seven plans to choose from, compared to a national average of 53. Is this scarcity of competition for our state one of the results of Gov. Bentley's reticence?

Lawsuits threatened against blogger

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Lawsuits have been threatened by Birmingham Lawyer Bill Baxley against Roger Schuler, who operates a political blog called [Legal Schnauzer](#) , a move that has done nothing but increase the blog reports by Schuler about Baxley's client and others.

Schuler reports that deputies from the Shelby County, Alabama, sheriff's office have made at least four visits to his house this past week in the wake of his reporting about certain photos of a prominent state political figure.

"On each occasion, at least two vehicles and two deputies came to our home and pounded on the door. At least two times, the second vehicle was a sports utility model that looks like it could be used for transporting prisoners. At least one time, three deputies appeared at our door step.

"What is going on? The only legitimate reason I can think for deputies to appear at my home would be if they were trying to serve court papers. According to press reports, a female political operative has sued me," Schuler writes. If this ever hits the mainstream media, it will become a political bombshell of significant interest.

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