

President's re-election changes nothing for state health insurance exchange

By Wayne Hoffman

Now that President Obama has won re-election, the voices for a state health insurance exchange have amplified their rhetoric, telling us that we must stop dilly-dallying and get busy like bees building the federal government's health care hive.

In reality, the election changes nothing.

Top officials in other states have yet to become drones for the federal government collective. Even after the election, they're still resorting to independent thought. They know our freedom is best served by continuing to reject Obamacare.

Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell says his state won't move forward with a health insurance exchange. "I don't want to buy a pig in a poke for the taxpayers of Virginia," McDonnell said, expressing disappointment that the Obama administration hasn't answered his series of questions about the operation of an exchange on behalf of the Republican Governors Association.

Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal said the state exchange requirements are too restrictive, and indicated he would tell the federal government Georgia is not interested in starting a new government health care bureaucracy.

Florida Gov. Rick Scott said, "No one has been able to show me that that health care exchange is going to do anything other than raise taxes, raise the cost of our companies to do business."

In South Carolina, a top state official, Tony Keck said, "We've let (the federal government) know we're not going to set up a state-based exchange. It's a federal program and it's their responsibility to make it work."

Kansas, Missouri, Texas and Louisiana also continue to hold out.

So to recap, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Obamacare. President Obama won re-election. And yet some states continue stand firm against developing a state insurance exchange.

Idaho Gov. Butch Otter has yet to say what he's going to do. But his health insurance exchange committee, of which I was a member, voted 10-2 to support the development of a state exchange using the bogus argument that Idaho would "retain control" over the exchange if we built it. As you can guess, I voted against the state exchange, as did Boise Rep. Lynn Luker.

This country was born out of resistance to big government tyranny. By design of our founders, the states have long served as a backstop to prevent incursions into our liberty through the use of centralized power.

An example includes states resisting the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in the 1850s that made American citizens duty-bound to return freed slaves to their white masters or face criminal charges; another: states collectively refusing to implement a national identification card system as recently as 2008.

Not so long ago, taxpayers put \$120 million into the renovation of the state Capitol. At the time, I was under an impression the remodeled building was going to be a symbol of state sovereignty to last another 100 years or more.

Gov. Otter and the state Legislature have the opportunity to make the state of Idaho a beacon for freedom. The alternative is to cause Idaho and its government to be coerced into becoming nothing more than a doppelganger for the federal government at great long-term cost to future generations.

Yes, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the federal government can make people buy a commodity; in this case, health insurance. Yes, President Obama won re-election. And yes, part of the president's law says the states are to develop health insurance exchanges or the federal government will do it for us.

All that does not mean we should stop thinking for ourselves that the cause of freedom is no longer valid or worth fighting for, or that we should scurry about and rush to implement a law we know to be wrongheaded.