

On April 24, the *Seattle Times* Truth Needle examined some my statements about the 2010 Affordable Care Act and labeled them as being “mostly false.” Unfortunately, for the American public, my statements are true and the law is a sweeping overreach by the federal government.

The *Times* contested three truths about ACA, also known as Obamacare: it mandates the amount and type of insurance we buy; it will limit our choice of doctors, and an unelected group of bureaucrats will be making health care decisions.

Before discussing specifics – I want to point to a larger truth: of course Obamacare mandates coverage and will limit our choices – that’s what it is designed to do just as surely as guaranteed student loans are designed to steer students to college. President Obama wants to steer patients into the most cost-effective treatments, as determined by the federal government. Denying the law’s intent is silly. We should be arguing about whether the federal government is the correct place for this regulation, not about whether the regulations exist. Of course they do. That’s the whole point of the law.

To address the first point, even “Truth Needle” recognizes ACA does mandate that we buy approved insurance plans. The mandate to buy insurance has gone before the U.S. Supreme Court and the arguments for and against the constitutionality of that mandate have been robustly debated.

As “Truth Needle” acknowledges, Obamacare also mandates what type of coverage must be offered by insurers. In the past, this type of regulation has been left to the states. Our state, for instance, requires insurance policies to offer chiropractic care. Now the federal government has set in place federal requirements.

Whether you think that these are mandates are for better or for worse isn’t the question. Either way, they’re still mandates – and Maria Cantwell, along with every Senator and Congressman that voted in favor of the ACA, voted to force us to buy the insurance they mandate.

We know at the state level that these various mandates have driven up the cost of insurance significantly.

Second, it will result in limiting our choice of doctors. According to the New York Times many insurers are “promoting affordable plans with a narrower selection of doctors or hospitals” as a response to Obamacare (NYT, July 17, 2010).

Groups such as the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation make the same link between the ACA and narrowing patient choices. When the *Seattle Times* says that these limited provider choices have been affecting the the insurance market since before the ACA, they’re missing the point. Regulation has hurt health care availability prior to Obamacare, but the overregulation in ACA will make it much worse.

Finally, the ACA does allow an unelected board of bureaucrats to make treatment choices.

I was referring to two unelected boards – both of which “Truth Needle” recognized, but while I refer to them as unelected bureaucrats, the *Times* prefers to call them scientific experts.

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The first is the Independent Payment Advisory Board – 15 unelected bureaucrats with extraordinary powers to enact health care changes. The Board is so disliked that both Democrat and Republican lawmakers on the House Energy and Commerce Committee voted to repeal the board last year – without one dissenting vote.

The second board is the US Preventative Services Task Force Council. Another group of unelected bureaucrats that will be influencing our health care decisions.

It was disappointing, although not unexpected, that the *Seattle Times* Truth Needle was a faulty compass. I'll keep telling the truth during this campaign and keep trying to discuss the issues before us as a bloated federal government overspends, over-regulates and over-borrows.