

If you don't know, now you know

A discussion on "Obamacare"

By Burton Hodges
Staff Writer

Given that the Affordable Care Act is so threatening that it caused the central government of a global superpower to shut down indefinitely, I find it pertinent that I address the law fondly referred to as "Obamacare" and assess the extent to which it will corrupt American democracy.

In order to assess this we must first look at what the act does and will do in the future. Since the act became law in 2010, I have never understood why so many people opposed its provisions. The very nature of the act's title, affordable *health care*, makes perfect sense. As the act has become a more present part of reality and its tenants go into effect, my confusion about why people hate it so much has increased.

The only conclusion I can come up with is that some people simply do not know or even care what the act says or does. This hypothesis was validated last week when Jimmy Kimmel aired a special on his talk show, "Jimmy Kimmel Live." A camera crew went to Hollywood and stopped random people in the middle of the street to interview them. The crew asked, "which did you support, Obamacare or the Affordable Care Act?" Of the people interviewed in the clip, not a single one knew that they were the same thing. All but one of the interviewees actively opposed Obamacare and cited various reasons, which ranged from "it's socialism" and "it's anti-American" to "it will lead to gun prohibition."

Now I usually do not assign much weight to "Hey, mind if I ask you a few questions?" interviews collected from a small, random sample of people pulled off the street, but I think that Kimmel's TV spot was incredibly indicative of the status of our electorate.

Many Americans don't actually know what the *&%\$ is going on. They think they do, but anyone who has a Facebook can attest to the endless amount of irrelevant, ad hominem, misguiding and most of the time ridiculously inaccurate links that people post to studies or articles conducted by some organization that no one has ever heard of.

The Affordable Care Act has become a viral topic of debate; it's consumed social media and the news. Even when the act is not being directly referred to, it has fueled this subculture that genuinely thinks "Obamacare" is a systematic plan to convert America into a Karl Marx style socialist state.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) does not

quite achieve that affect. On the contrary, one of the act's primary provisions establishes a competitive market-based approach to selling and purchasing health insurance, which is a staple principle of capitalism.

Effective on Oct. 1, Americans are able to visit Health Insurance Exchange websites and compare the rates of different insurance companies. The exchanges will provide customers with significantly more information about pricing and programs as well as providing more subsidies for people to purchase different coverage packages. The exchange will also offer small business more options for employee coverage.

The vast majority of work-based health care plans will not see changes. However people with high priced or limited employer coverage will get better rates depending on how poor their coverage is.

Medicare, a social insurance program administered by the federal government that guarantees health care to people over 65 or with specific disabilities, will not change its coverage plan. The ACA will only tighten some screws in its current operations, lower its costs and save an estimated \$455 billion dollars over the next decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Medicaid, a health program for persons of all ages who have insufficient income and resources to afford health care, will not change its current coverage plans but will significantly expand coverage beginning Jan. 1, 2014.

This expansion will provide healthcare to millions of Americans who were previously uninsured. However Medicaid is funded by both the Federal and State governments and operated by the states individually, which complicates things. The Supreme Court decided in 2012 that this part of the act was unconstitutional and that the states could decide whether or not they would expand their Medicaid programs according to the ACA.

This is partially why people don't really understand the ACA. In addition to not having to expand Medicaid, states aren't mandated to create their own insurance exchange markets. Although Republicans tend to be proponents of strong state governments, the 24 of the 30 current Republican governors who are boycotting parts of the ACA have chosen to let the federal government operate their exchange markets.

Consistent with this bipartisan trend, 18 of the 20 Democratic governors have built or are planning to build their own markets

See 'Obamacare,' page 8

Go Green Tip of the Week

Heels before wheels

By Kayla Leed
Staff Writer

Gasoline is one of the largest contributors to the destruction of the ozone layer. According to Brian Howard, a blogger for the dailygreen.com, ten seconds of idling in a car uses more gas than what it would take to start your car back up.

Howard writes, "Americans idle away 2.9 billion gallons of gas a year, worth around \$78.2 billion." Not only would awareness of our idling time help save money, but it would help protect our environment as well.

Another way to conserve gas money and combat climate change is to walk instead of drive. Ingles, the baseball field, Ross Hall, MG, MS, Myers Dining Hall; they aren't that far away! Commuters would also appreciate it if their parking spaces weren't filled by lazy residents' cars.

If we all walked a little more and drove a little less, we would save millions of dollars and the forests around us would be proud to call us their citizens. Let's keep it clean and green!

TODAY 9 a.m. -12 p.m.

"Choosing Your Path" Workshop



Undeclared major? Not sure what you want to do with your life? You are not alone!

OCTOBER 11 9am-12pm

In the AEC, Rutherford Room B

Drop-in anytime for this short session!