Week 3 – ACA Outline

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**1. Introduction**

Being able to go see a doctor when sick is something many people take for granted. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has made something as simple as seeking medical treatment when needed possible for many Americans. In fact 61% of those surveyed who use ACA health coverage benefits would not have been able to afford medical care prior to the enactment of ACA (Gardner, 2016). The Affordable Care Act, commonly referred to as the Obama care, is a healthcare act that was signed in to law 2010 by President Obama. The act was put in to place to lower the amount federal government spends on health care in the United States and to ensure all Americans have access to affordable health care coverage.

**2. Thesis Statement**

While many people do not think the government should force people to buy health coverage, the affordable care act is beneficial to all Americans because over 20 million people have gained health insurance since the introduction of ACA, insurance coverage can no longer be denied because of existing conditions, and ACA can lower the cost of premiums for families by providing subsidies for families and individuals that cannot afford health insurance.

**3. Heading for Main Point 1-** **Describes the historical and Constitutional basis of American Government’s structure and how this relates to the policy.**

The Affordable Care Act is no stranger to controversy and has had its uphill battles. A lawsuit ensued just hours after the Affordable Care Act was signed by President Obama lead by the state Florida and 13 other states indicated mandating individuals have health coverage is against the key principles of freedom in the U.S. Constitution. It took the Supreme Court three months to render a decision of 5-4, acknowledging the ACA is constitutional. If we take a look back at origin of the ACA we see that in December 2009, all of the Republican senators voted against the bill and all Democrats senators and two independent senators voted for the bill, passing the Senate by a vote of 60-39 and in March 2010 it passed the House of Representatives (Esteban& Dickinson 2013). This was a major victory for the Obama administration as passing a bill for health care to benefit the American people had been one of his key campaign promises (Esteban& Dickinson 2013). In spite of the fact that the Affordable Care Act provides the American people many advantages such requiring that the insurers accept all the American applicants regardless of their health status, provide coverage for immunizations and preventive care, and allowing unmarried children to remain covered on their parents health insurance plan until the age of 26, many issues have been raised for debate such that there are people who did not support the reform. Some concerns raised include the cost, quality of health care, its coverage and accountability. Many question if each individual has the right to health care, then to what extent should care be given. In her article, Health Care: Constitutional rights and Legislative Powers, Swendiman addresses the fact that that the constitution of the United States did not address the right to health, asserting there were not terms such health or medical care recorded in the constitution (Swendiman, 2012),

**4. Heading for Main Point 2 – Explains how the policy is involved within the process of checks and balances.**

Checks and balances have been directly involved with the ACA policy since its origination and checks and balances will most likely continue to come into play as long as the Republicans and Democrats cannot agree on what is best for the American people concerning health care. It is no secret that President Trump is not a fan of the Affordable Care Act and has made campaign promises to repeal ACA and replace it with an alternative health care act. However, the President must go through a series of check and balances before repealing any parts of the ACA. An example of how checks and balances impact the ACA is in July 2017, a proposal to repeal parts of the Affordable Care Act without an immediate replacement was rejected by the Senate. According to Glied and Jackson (2017), there are numerous potential impacts of repealing the ACA. “More moderate GOP senators have said they fear repealing without an immediate replacement because it could generate even more uncertainty in the American insurance market” (Pramuk, 2017, para. 12).

**5. Heading for Main Point 3 – Describes how the policy relates to public policy and elections and how the policy is portrayed by the media.**

The media and public policy have played a tremendous role not only in the implementation of the Affordable Care Act but also through its entire existence. The media uses its platform to advocate for or oppose the ACA. Local television news is the most common source Americans get their news from and the majority of people’s political ideologies are directly associated with their media exposure. The media affects people’s decisions when implementing and choosing health care options. “Local news both provided information to new enrollees and exposed many more millions of Americans to information with which they might interpret the success or failure of ACA implementation” (Gollust, Baum, Niederdeppe, Barry & Fowler, 2017 para. 2).

**6. Heading for Main Point 4 – Explains how the policy impacts voting and the election process.**

Candidates campaign to promote their perspectives, deliver their messages, and present their ideas and viewpoints on issues that matter most to the voting population. Like many hot-button issues, health care tends to be a leading platform contenders put a great deal of effort into on the campaign trail. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been no different. In this last election, Trump and Clinton both relied heavily on either the repeal and replacement of ACA (Trump) or the enhancement of ACA (Clinton) to sway voters in their favor. Depending on who you believed, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is “either a positive change for the health care system or as a total disaster” (Gardner, 2016, p251). Rather the voter is for or against the Affordable Care Act, their views on health care policy is a vital element that will always impact election outcomes.

The Republican administration aims to repeal the ACA and replace it with an alternative. President Trump’s “Healthcare Reform to Make America Great Again.” is the Republican administration’s equivalent to the Affordable Care Act. With President Trump’s health care plan millions of people would lose their insurance coverage, 21 million to be act (Analysis of Donald Trump's Health Care Plan, 2016). To date, President Trump’s efforts to completely repeal the Affordable Care Act have been unsuccessful. The Trump administration managed to repeal the ACA individual mandate clause which would eliminate the penalty for not having health coverage effective in 2019. This bill passed Congress in December 2017 as part of the GOP tax bill. Some feel the individual mandate repeal will do more harm than good for the American people. “The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) predicts that premiums in the markets would spike 10% without ACA’s individual mandate as the exchanges are left with a sicker consumer pool” (Mukherjee, para. 5).

**7. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Affordable Care Act has given numerous American a better quality of life because they now have health insurance they did not have before the ACA legislation was passed. The ACA and is a great option for those who could not afford health insurance and has proven to be a valuable asset to many. Since its introduction in 2010, 22.8 million Americans are newly insured because of ACA (Gottlieb, 2015). There has been a considerable amount of controversy surrounding the ACA including questioning the constitutionally of the act. Check and balances have also impacted the ACA due to President Trump’s determination to repeal the act with an alternative health care reform. The media and public policy have also played its part in the perception of the ACA. People tend to make decisions and or assumptions concerning the Affordable Care Act based on their media exposure, which also influences their perception of whether or not the ACA is auspicious. Additionally, the ACA impacts voting and the election process as we know it. Those that view the ACA as favorable and opportune will most likely vote for the candidate that is supportive of the ACT in lieu of the candidate who opposes it.

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