



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Floor Statement of Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.)
on the Real World Impact of the Affordable Care Act
As prepared for delivery

John Adams, America's first Vice President — and second President — and whose bust sits right above us looking over the Senate every day, once said, "Facts are stubborn things. And whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence."

It's been more than three years since President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act into law. In that time, its opponents have made every effort to misinform the American public about this law and the vital benefits it provides the American people. But as Adams said, facts are stubborn things. And I want to make sure the facts about the Affordable Care Act do not get lost amongst the criticism and false claims.

So here are the facts:

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, 100 million people have received free preventive care. More than 7 million seniors have saved nearly \$9 billion on prescription drugs. And 25 million people who lacked health insurance will finally be able to get the coverage they need.

The Affordable Care Act has also helped slow the growth in health care costs. National health care spending grew by 3.9 percent each year from 2009 to 2011 – the slowest rate on record. That means we will save huge sums of money down the line. For example, the official projection of national health expenditures in 2019 has dropped by \$574 billion dollars in three years. \$574 billion!

And while there is more than just the Affordable Care Act at work in those savings, it has certainly played a large role.

The health insurance marketplaces are open for business, and every day we hear how the website HealthCare.gov is working better, picking up steam and handling more and more consumers. The New York Times reported on Tuesday that "the number of applicants who dropped a plan into their virtual grocery carts was climbing at a rapid clip."

Those are the facts. The Affordable Care Act is helping millions of people. It's improving millions of lives.

But frankly, I think the American people are tired of hearing politicians argue over this law. I'm sure every one of my colleagues has spoken about it at length here on the Senate floor or back at home. I know I have.

I think it's time we change the conversation. I think it's time to hear from the American people about how this law is helping them. I think it's time we hear what the Times called, quote, "voices of quiet optimism and relief amid the uproar over the health law."

Take these two stories from that Times report.

Claire He is a college student whose parents have never been able to afford insurance. She and her brother lived most of their lives without coverage. And she told the Times that if they got the flu, "we just stayed home and waited it out."

But when Claire and her family sat down to look at their options under the Affordable Care Act, they found a high-quality plan that will cost them only \$30 a month.

Claire said of the ACA's critics, "I see so much negativity behind this ... But in reality there's a lot of families who are like mine."

And then there is the story of Bruce Klein-Schmidt, a lawyer who lives in Louisville, Kentucky. Bruce had insurance through his employer until he stopped working full time.

Bruce is 61 – not yet eligible for Medicare. In another era, his health problems would have made it impossible for him to find insurance. But using Kentucky's new health marketplace, Bruce found a generous plan that saves him \$300 a month in premiums.

Bruce called it a "godsend."

There are hundreds of similar stories in newspapers all across the nation. The San Jose Mercury News, The Las Vegas Sun, The Hartford Courant, The Palm Beach Post, the LA Times and many, many more. Not only do we read these kinds of personal stories in newspapers. We receive letters with them every day.

Here are just a few examples from letters I've received from Montanans.

John wrote in to my office with his family's story. John's daughter recently beat cancer. She's under age 26, so thanks to the Affordable Care Act, she is still covered under her parents' insurance.

And when she does turn 26, she will have a guaranteed right to coverage. No insurance company can turn her away because she had cancer. John said they're counting on the Affordable Care Act to help them find an affordable plan.

Marg wrote in to say that the Affordable Care Act has been an enormous relief for her. She has battled emphysema for years – despite the fact that she's not a smoker. A doctor once told her never to leave her job because no one else would ever insure her.

So for Marg, the Affordable Care Act means she can breathe again – that she doesn't have to live in fear of losing her insurance or falling into bankruptcy because of her medical costs.

And Jillian wrote in to say how excited she was to be able to shop for coverage on the marketplace. Jillian is married, and she and her husband are expecting a child. But her husband's employer-sponsored plan does not help pay for her coverage.

She wrote, "I am looking to make a more affordable choice for me and my baby-to-be..." Letters like these come in every day. They tell the stories of how the Affordable Care Act is working.

And in the end, that's what matters. Not the punditry. Not the polls. Not the political points.

What matters is that the law is improving millions of people's lives.

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