

STOP THE HIT

February 13, 2015

The Honorable Charles Boustany
1431 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema
1530 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Boustany and Sinema:

On behalf of the nation's small business owners, their employees and millions of self-employed Americans, the Stop the HIT Coalition commends you for introducing H.R. 928, the *Jobs and Premium Protection Act*, to repeal the health insurance tax (HIT) provision enacted as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA).

As you know, this hidden and punitive tax will increase premiums on the small business community, which is the primary source of new job creation in the US economy. This new tax falls on the fully insured market, where 90 percent of small business owners purchase insurance for their employees and themselves. It is a tax that increases over time as premiums rise, which by the very nature of the tax will force premiums to increase. In 2014, this tax cost small businesses \$7 billion, rising to \$14 billion in 2018, and \$20 billion in 2025.¹

While the HIT is cloaked as a fee, it is actually a tax on insurance providers that is being passed on to small employers, their employees and the self-employed. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) confirmed this, stating that the HIT "would be largely passed through to consumers [small and family-owned businesses] in the form of higher premiums for private coverage." Increasing the cost of health insurance plans for small employers and the self-employed makes offering affordable coverage, or any coverage at all, to employees more difficult. In fact, former CBO Director Douglas Holtz-Eakin estimates the average impact is as much as a three percent (or \$5,000) increase in premiums for a family of four over ten years.

In the more immediate time frame, the Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that "eliminating [the HIT] fee could decrease the average family premium in 2016 by \$350 to \$400." The Committee also has noted multiple times through their analysis that the tax would be passed on to the purchaser of insurance in the form of higher premiums, further validating what the CBO, small business owners and others have stated since passage of the PPACA.

The employer community has historically had two major concerns related to health insurance, cost and availability. As the HIT increases the cost of health insurance for small business naturally the

¹ Congressional Budget Office, "The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2015-2025," Table 4-3, January 2015: 99.

availability of coverage diminishes. The HIT should be repealed and the nation's millions of small employers, workers and the self-employed deserve no less. Accordingly, they, and the members of the Stop the HIT Coalition, commend and thank you for introducing this important bipartisan legislation.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Affordable Services
American Bakers Association
American Council of Engineering Companies
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Hotel & Lodging Association
American Rental Association
American Supply Association
Associated Builders and Contractors
Associated General Contractors
Auto Care Association
Automotive Recyclers Association
Independent Electrical Contractors
International Franchise Association
International Housewares Association
National Association of Convenience Stores
National Association of Health Underwriters
National Association of Manufacturers
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors
National Club Association
National Community of Pharmacist Association
National Federation of Independent Business
National Funeral Directors Association
National Grange
National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association
National Restaurant Association
National Retail Federation
National Roofing Contractors Association
National Small Business Association
NUCA Representing Utility and Excavation Contractors
Petroleum Marketers Association of America
Plastics Trade Association
Printing Industries of America
Professional Golfers Association
Retail Industry Leaders Association
Society of American Florists
Specialty Equipment Market Association
U.S. Chamber of Commerce