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Supreme Court Upholds Health Care Act



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Supreme Court Hands Obama a Huge Healthcare Victory



President Obama address American public after the ruling was announced by the Supreme Court upholding the constitutionality of the Affordable Health Care Act.

By George E. Curry
Editor-in-Chief NNPA News Service

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – With conservative Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr. providing a surprise supporting vote, the United States Supreme Court gave President Barack Obama a major victory Thursday by upholding the constitutionality of the Affordable Health Care Act.

In the most watched Supreme Court case since

Bush v. Gore in 2000, the justices upheld the landmark healthcare law that requires all Americans except those objecting on religious grounds or facing financial hardship to obtain health insurance by 2014 or pay a financial penalty. The vote was 5-4, with Roberts joining the court's four liberals – Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Sonia Sotomayor, Stephen G. Breyer and Elena Kagan. Anthony M. Kennedy, usually the court's lone swing vote, sided with fellow conservatives Antonin Scalia, Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas.

The ruling grew out of three cases challenging the

constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act that were appealed to the Supreme Court – a suit by the National Federation of Independent Business against Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius and two cases involving HHS and the state of Florida.

The legislation was signed into law by President Obama on March 23, 2010. Most of its provisions will be phased in over the next two years. Among other things, the law prohibits insurance companies from denying coverage based on a pre-existing condition, allows children to remain on their parents' insurance

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P.O. Box 57347, New Orleans, LA 70157-7347 | Phone: (504) 821-7421 | Fax: (504) 821-7622
 editorial: datanewseditor@bellsouth.net | advertising: datanewsad@bellsouth.net

Terry B. Jones
CEO/Publisher
 Glenn Jones
VP Advertising & Marketing
 Cheryl Mainor
Managing Editor
 Edwin Buggage
Editor
 Calla Victoria
Executive Assistant
 June Hazeur
Accounting

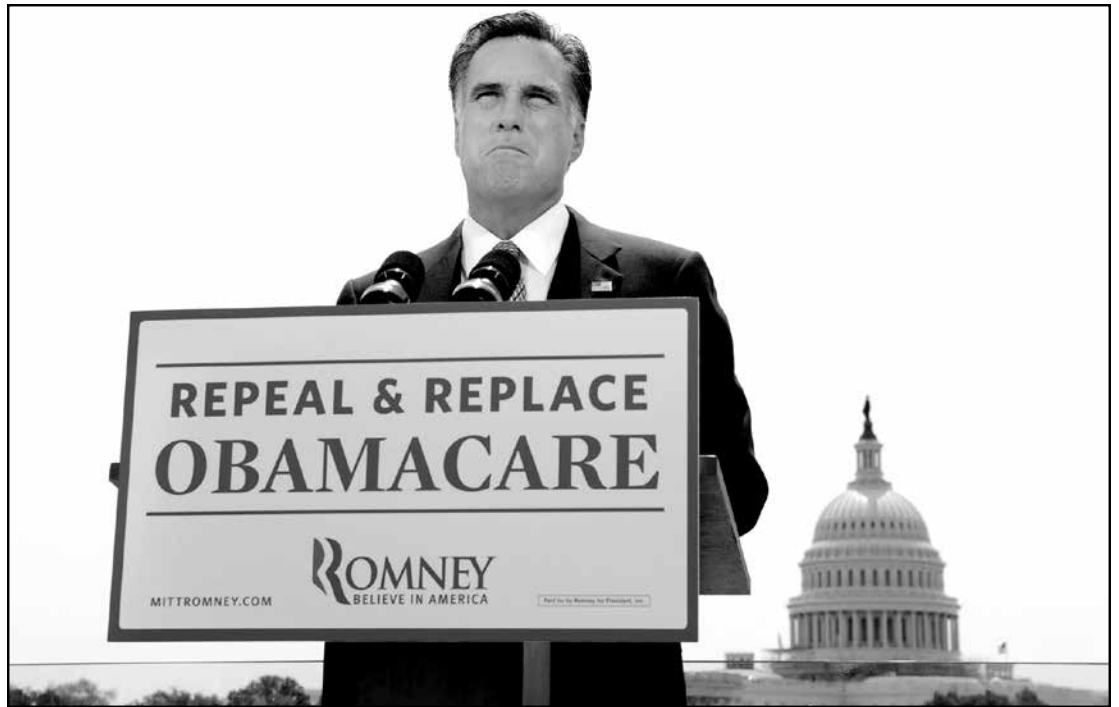
Contributors
 George E. Curry
 Edwin Buggage
 Calla Victoria
 Tommye Myrick
 Chris Mercadel
 Raghan Durrouseau
Art Direction & Production
 MainorMedia.com
Editorial Submissions
 datanewseditor@bellsouth.net
Advertising Inquiries
 datanewsad@bellsouth.net

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United States Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts



Republican Presidential Candidate Mitt Romney has pledged to repeal the Affordable Health Care Act on day one if he is elected President in November.

plan until age 26, expands access to insurance to 30 million Americans, eliminates annual and lifetime coverage caps, creates insurance exchanges at the state level for individuals and small businesses, expands eligibility for Medicaid and requires insurance companies to cover certain preventive services without co-pays or deductibles.

In a televised speech from the White House, Obama said, "The highest court in the land has now spoken. We will continue to implement this law. And we'll work together to improve on it where we can. But what we won't do, what the country can't afford to do, is re-fight the political battles of two years ago or go back to the way things were. With today's announcement, it's time for us to move forward."

Even though the ruling represents a clear victory for President Obama as he faces re-election in less than five months, Republicans immediately vowed to repeal the measure in Congress. However, that appears unlikely for now. Although Republicans hold a majority in the House, Democrats hold an edge in the Senate.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said, "Today's decision makes one thing clear: Congress must act to repeal this misguided law. Obamacare has not only limited choices and increased health care costs for American families, it has made it harder for American businesses to hire."

But Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid disagreed. He said on

the Senate floor, "No longer will Americans be a heart attack or a car crash away from bankruptcy. No longer will Americans live in fear of losing their health insurance because they lose their job." He added, "Our Supreme Court has spoken. The matter is settled. It's time for Republicans to stop fighting yesterday's battle."

That's exactly what's expected to happen in the Republican-dominated House.

House Majority Leader Eric Cantor [R-Va.] described the ruling as a "crushing blow" and declared, "During the week of July 9th, the House will once again repeal ObamaCare, clearing the way for patient-centered reforms that lower costs and increase choice."

The official name of the legislation is the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. But Republican critics have derisively referred to it as ObamaCare, a term major news organizations have quickly adopted.

President Obama has flipped the pejorative term on its head, saying, "I have no problem with people saying Obama cares. I do care."

Democrats and Republicans, all claiming to care about average Americans, are on opposite sides of the issue. The bill passed the Senate on December 24, 2009 by a vote of 60-39, with all Democrats and two Independents voting for it and all but one Republican voting against it. It passed the House on March 21, 2010 by a vote of 219-212, with 34 Democrats and all 178 Republicans voting against it.

According to an analysis by the Urban Institute, the number of uninsured African Americans under the age of 65 will drop from 7.4 million to 3.4 million as a result of the healthcare law, a decrease of 54.6 percent. But some problem areas remain.

In a detailed examination of the law, Health Affairs magazine concluded: "Of the estimated 26.4 million individuals projected to be uninsured after the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, those eligible for Medicaid and CHIP [the Children's Health Insurance Program] but who remain unenrolled, constitute the single largest group, at 35.7 percent. This eligible-but-unenrolled group includes 58.8 percent of the blacks who we estimate will remain uninsured under the Affordable Care Act, which is a higher proportion than found in the other racial and ethnic groups examined."

For the law to have an even greater impact, effective outreach programs must be used to reach those less likely to enroll in Medicaid, a state and federal partnership that provides medical coverage for needy families, pregnant women, children, the blind and the elderly, and CHIP, also a federal matching fund for states to provide health coverage to nearly 8 million children in families with incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid, but can't afford private coverage.

The Health Affairs report stated, "Our analysis shows that the Affordable Care Act has the potential to reduce racial and ethnic

coverage differentials substantially." It explained, "The black-white differential in uninsurance rates is predicted to shrink by 57.3 percent, from 7.7 percentage points to 3.3 percentage points."

The Supreme Court's ruling was not a total victory for the Obama administration. Under the healthcare law, Medicaid was expected to extend coverage to about 17 million Americans by covering everyone below 133 percent of the federal poverty line, approximately \$14,500 for individuals. The administration had said that states that refused to go along with the change would lose their federal match.

Roberts said the requirement that states expand Medicaid or lose federal funding was a violation of states' rights. He wrote, "Congress has no authority to order the States to regulate according to its instructions." He added, "The states are given no choice in this case: They must either accept a basic change in the nature of Medicaid or risk losing all Medicaid funding."

Thursday's ruling now allows states to opt out of expansion without losing their federal funds. Medicaid is jointly funded by the federal government and states. According to the National Association of Medicaid Directors, Medicaid will spend more than \$400 billion this year to provide health care to more than 60 million Americans.

In their dissent, Justices Scalia, Kennedy, Thomas and Alito argued, "The Act before us here exceeds federal power both in man-

dating the purchase of health insurance and in denying nonconsenting States all Medicaid funding."

The court's majority upheld what was described as the heart of the healthcare law.

Roberts, who was nominated to the court by President George W. Bush and opposed by then-Senator Barack Obama, agreed with conservatives that the individual mandate – the requirements that most individuals purchase insurance – was unconstitutional under the commerce clause of the Constitution.

Under that theory, Congress can force people to purchase insurance because the failure to do so affects interstate commerce. Roberts rejected that argument. However, he helped form a majority on the court by agreeing that a financial penalty for refusing to buy health insurance under the Affordable Care Act amounts to a tax and therefore is constitutional under Congress' power to tax.

In his televised statement, Obama said it should be clear by now that he did not propose health reform to be popular.

He said, "Whatever the politics, today's decision was a victory for people all over this country whose lives will be more secure because of this law and the Supreme Court's decision to uphold it."

What is your opinion about this ruling? Data News Weekly would like to hear from you about this topic. Please send your comments to datanewseditor@bellsouth.net, or join us on facebook and voice your opinion there.

Home Style

A Rose By Any Other Name Would Still Be Easy to Grow!

Part 2



By MG Calla Victoria
Data News Columnist

How roses are grown

This is a continuation of last week's article on roses; if you missed that article you can view it online at ladatanews.com, in the archives look for the issue of June 23-29th. Roses are propagated in two ways; one way of propagating roses is grafting a bud on to a root stock. When a Rose is grafted, the bud eye is removed from one rose bush, a slit is made into another rose bush (this bush is called the root stock) and the bud from the first bush is placed into the pocket made in the second bush and wrapped in place. As that bud begins to grow out, that point is what is called the "bud union." You may have heard that in our climate the bud union should always be above the soil. This is true because the bud union is most susceptible to disease. It can be scary purchasing bare root roses because in most cases they look like naked branches with roots shooting out of the bottom. Look for healthy green canes, fresh looking roots, also look for a grading number on the plastic wrapper. The American Beauty Rose Selection has a grading system for grafted roses. The grades are 1, 1 1/2, and 2, with grade 1 being the best. Buying grade 1 is high-

ly recommended as these plants will grow better and produce more roses in the first season than roses of lower grades.

Roses are also propagated from cuttings. When a Rose is propagated from a cutting it is "grown on its own roots," and that process is quite simple. First you take cuttings from any rose bush, the cuttings should be taken from healthy green branches. The thorns and leaves should be removed from the cutting, leaving only one leaf so that the plant can photosynthesize (which is how plants feed themselves and make food from the sun). The cuttings are roughed up at the bottom, dipped in a rooting hormone powder and placed in a pot with soil. It is always a good idea to take several cuttings to insure that a few of them will catch. The "Rose Ladies," who are dedicated volunteers at the New Orleans Botanical Garden, have honed this process into a fine art. They keep large stock rose bushes of those wonderful antique roses and they all are alphabetized in neat rows. The team is headed by Timmie Reinecke along with Linda Hattier, Clay Latimer, Valerie Tang, Brenda Bougois, and Nettie Blouin. They take thousands of cuttings from the stock rose bushes, trim up the cuttings, dip them in rooting hormone, and place the cuttings in

pots of sand. After several weeks they dump the cuttings and the sand out, and then you will see those very fine healthy white roots dangling at the bottom of the cuttings. Now those cuttings are carefully placed in potting soil in four-inch pots and placed in a section of the Pelican Green House that is regularly watered. Once those cuttings get several leaves and begin to look like tiny rose bushes, then the ladies move the plants over to the succulent/cactus side of the Green House because now these small plants are starting to take on the characteristics of roses and roses do not like to be wet. All of the roses grown at the Pelican Green House are grown on their own roots, and many are rare, intoxicatingly fragrant, heirloom roses. There is a plant sale at the Pelican Greenhouse on the second Saturday of each month if you are in the market for some exquisite roses.

Selecting roses

When shopping for roses you are going to find bare root roses, or roses potted in containers. Look for roses that are disease resistant, re-blooming and fragrant. With that in mind there is help out there to insure that you select quality roses. Look for roses with a rating from the American Rose Society (ARS). A rating of 10 is

perfect, 9-9.9 is outstanding, 8-8.9 is excellent, 7-7.9 is good, 6-6.9 is fair and 5.9 and below is of questionable value. The "Handbook for Selecting Roses," a list of roses and their ratings is published by the American Rose Society. Another group that tests roses is All-America Rose Selections (AARS). Only a few roses are designated as All-America Rose Selection winners. The AARS designation indicates a quality Rose that has been tested in a variety of growing conditions

After you have gotten your roses home and planted in a sunny corner, there is not much else required. Roses are drought-tolerant so they don't need a lot of water, fertilize them occasionally, and enjoy!

If you would like to have your garden to be considered for "Data's Garden of the Week," send in photos of you and your garden to datanewseditor@bellsouth.net. Please type "Garden" on the subject line. Coming soon you will be able to upload your gardening questions and suggestions to our website, I will also be posting a weekly gardening tip on the website.

Remember never get too busy or too important to stop and enjoy the beautiful flowers!

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Arts & Mingle

Photos by Raghan Durrouseau

Highlights from the event Arts & Mingle sponsored by Arts on Fire at The George & Leah McKenna Museum of African American Art.



Autocrat Club Circle of Friends

Photos by Christopher Mercadel

Autocrat Club held its annual Circle of Friends Dance at the Autocrat Club and Data was there!!!



Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill Held over for Essence Weekend at the JuJu Bag July 6,7,8



By Tommie Myri

The extremely popular show Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill starring Sharon Martin will play every night of Essence weekend all shows are at 8:00 PM at the JuJu Bag's.

Oh, yeah and it is a dinner theater so you can enjoy cocktails and the JuJu Bag's really interesting and delicious food as you enjoy the show. OMG the char-grilled oysters!

Obamacare

Race and America in the 21st Century



Edwin Buggage
 Editor-in-Chief

fan the flames of misunderstanding and intolerance.

In an unfortunate twist this election is taking an ugly turn after 2008 where hope and optimism were the tone surrounding the campaign, and became a movement for change. Where ultimately a country collectively got together to make history by electing Barack Obama, President of the United States, and the world celebrated this triumph for a nation that took a quantum leap forward. For it had struggled with the issues of equality and inclusion some 40+ odd years earlier passing the Voting Rights Act in 1965. So that in 2008 hands that once picked cotton were now partly responsible for electing the nation's first African-American President.

As I covered the inauguration in our nation's capital on that cold and historic day in January of 2009, I watched as people cheered, hugged and cried as they believed this would signal a new day and direction for this country. That this country triumphed and the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., had come where someone would be judged not by the color of their

skin but the content of their character. And while this country is making monumental leaps both foreign and domestic under this administration there are still people who continue to hold on to the old baggage of days past. These are the political fossils who would rather work to play the old race game to delegitimize this President at every turn. I would contend that if many of the successes of this administration were made by someone other than Barack Obama this election would be a landslide victory akin to Reagan vs. Mondale in 1984 where Reagan won 49 states and ended up with 525 electoral votes.

This recent decision made by the Supreme Court if done the right way would radically change the way people receive healthcare in this country. While there are those who are detractors who say why would we want these changes and they point to other countries across the globe that has universal coverage as justification for the reasons they are against it. When you compare a country like Japan that has universal healthcare their lifespan is 83.91 vs. 78.49 for the U.S. according to the CIA World Fact Book. According to this same list that compares life expectancy the U.S. is ranked 50th out of 222 countries behind Canada, France, Singapore, Italy, Germany, the UK, Australia and a host of other countries that have some form of universal health coverage. Also when you compare expenditures per capita the U.S. outspends every rich nation according to the Kaiser Family Foundation using statistics from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OCED). The U.S. outspends in total health expenditure per capita three times as much as Japan and over two times as much as France and almost double as much as Canada.

This is done without favorable outcomes, but insurance companies and other private enterprises and the business of managed health has done nothing to prolong the lives of American citizens. What it does is create situations where one can become sick and lose everything as shown in Michael Moore's expose on the healthcare industry "Sicko" and that the propaganda about other countries healthcare systems are myths circulated by special interest that are in the business of making profits. This has proven to be the wrong approach to taking care of our citizens. What we need is a more humane approach of dealing with healthcare in this country and not make it all about business decisions, but saving lives.

This is the America that I believe most people would want to see regardless of

what side of the political aisle they stand on. For who would like to see one of their loved ones denied care that could have saved their lives or improved their quality of life. This court decision was a move to a more humane society, pushed forward by a man who during the last election cycle brought people together across the globe in the spirit of togetherness and unity believing that yes we can do big things. And that has been done under his administration. The automobile industry is recovering, Osama Bin Laden is dead, and troops are being pulled out of Iraq, and one-third of troops will be pulled out of Afghanistan by the end of 2012.

Barack Obama is a President that's shown that he can be strong but able to advance his agenda even against resistance and downright obstruction from the right. During his historic term he has enfranchised dispossessed minorities with the his support of marriage equality; and also being a moral compass for the nation guiding with his example by having no personal scandals and being a dedicated husband and dad. And with this latest achievement, Obama is showing what people can do when they work together embodying the words of Abraham Lincoln's first Inaugural address in 1861 given as the country was in the beginning stages of the Civil War, "We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

And this is what has happened during this first term of President's Obama Administration, he's tapped into the better angels of our nature. Doing this even in the face of obstruction, hate and polarization, he has with dignity, class, strength and fortitude shown that one can lead without playing partisan games, or using outdated Cold War rhetoric. President Obama understands the world is a very different place where it is interconnected in ways never seen before in human history. And last week the U.S. made a step in the right direction joining the rest of the world in extending health coverage to all Americans. This has been attempted since the days of FDR and it has taken over six decades to accomplish, but this day has finally come and Lady Liberty's light is shining brighter today as we are on the road to be a better and healthier nation.

For millions of Americans who have had to live with the burden of being either uninsured or underinsured as it relates to medical coverage are breathing a collective sigh of relief as the Affordable Care Act, was deemed constitutionally sound by the U.S. Supreme Court. Among conservatives this has caused an uproar that is just another of the many things that they've used throughout the term of Barack Obama's Presidency to

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Seven Green Wave Earn All-Louisiana Honors



Estefany Cruz



Melanie Mainor



Zandria DeBowles

When the Louisiana Sports Writers Association announced their 2012 All-Louisiana Track and Field squads, seven Green Wave student-athletes found their names among the state's best in their respective event. Estefany Cruz earned the only specialty award when she was selected as the Co-Freshman of the Year for her performance in the triple jump during the outdoor season.

The women's team grabbed five individual selections to the All-Louisiana squad and the men's team placed a pair of student-athletes on the team. Ana

Ruzevic (Javelin) was the lone Green Wave performer to earn First Team All-State accolades, while Katherine Crabtree (5000 Meter) and Geoffery Zelek (10000 Meter) each earned Second Team All-State honors. Cruz (Triple Jump), Zandria DeBowles (400 Hurdles), Melanie Mainor (High Jump) and Garrett Myer all earned a Third Team All-State nod.

Cruz had an outstanding rookie campaign for the Green Wave as she earned a spot at the 2012 NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships in the triple jump and earned Honor-

able Mention All-America honors. Her outdoor-best of 12.83 was the third best jump in school history and earned her Third Team All-State honors and her overall stellar season was good enough to bring home the Freshman of the Year award from the LSWA. The Guatemala City native became just the third women in Tulane history to clear the 13-meter mark when she landed a 13.03-meter leap at the Conference USA Indoor Championships. The rookie earned Second Team All-Conference USA honors during the indoor and outdoor campaigns, as well.

DeBowles makes an appearance on the All-Louisiana squad for the second straight season in the 400-meter hurdles and Mainor earns her first selection among the state's best. DeBowles qualified for the NCAA East Regional for the second consecutive year and posted a season-best time of 59.38 in her specialty event. The senior earned third team honors this season after being a second team pick last year. Mainor owned the team's top high jump mark and set a career-best mark of 1.70-meters to move her into a tie for fourth on the all-time charts at Tulane. The sophomore cleared 1.60-meters in four of her five meets and jumped 1.65-meters twice during the year.

The LSWA team is based on a list of the top three times or distances in outdoor events, which serves as the All-Louisiana team in each event, with the specialty awards voted on by the states sports writers and sports information directors.

SUNO earns positive marks after LA GRAD Act 1st year assessment



Southern University at New Orleans met or exceeded each of its goals under Year One of the LA GRAD Act based on findings released by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor this month. The report also showed that SUNO

has no recommendations for action to respond to and that data submitted by the University was sufficiently reliable as an indicator of meeting performance objective benchmarks. The LA GRAD (Granting Resources and

Autonomy for Diplomas) Act was instituted by Governor Bobby Jindal in 2010 to give colleges and universities increased autonomy in exchange for a commitment to meet clearly defined statewide performance goals, including boosting graduation rates.

"This is certainly something that the SUNO community can be proud of", said Chancellor Victor Ukpolo. "What these findings indicate is that Southern University at New Orleans is committed to the success of its students and this is a great foundation for us to build on. One of the most important factors was the reliability of the data that was submitted by the University. Our staff in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness should be commended for their

work with the Legislative Auditors."

The data measured was taken from the 2010-2011 school year. SUNO's results were as follows:

- 1st to 2nd Year Retention Rate: Exceeded Goal
- 1st to 3rd Year Retention Rate: Exceeded Goal
- Same Institution Graduation Rate: Met Goal
- Change in Program Completers (Baccalaureate): Met Goal
- Change in Program Completers (Masters): Met Goal

A summary of the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's report can be found at www.la.la.gov in the Reports & Data section.

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