

# THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER



A monthly column to inform ABC members about national and local issues impacting Maine's construction industry.

Dec. 2009



ABC's 2010 Chairman - Doug Newman of Newman Concrete Services in Richmond.

I wanted to share with you some thoughts about the health care proposals currently being debated in Washington, DC.

Kathleen and I flew down Wednesday to represent ABC at a U.S. Chamber of Commerce "fly-in" to express the concerns of Maine small businesses. We appeared in a press conference with minority leader Mitch

McConnell and several other leading republican senators, then met with Senator Snowe's chief staff person on health care - Alex Hecht and with Senator Collins, herself.

The good news is that neither of Maine's senators is likely to be the 60th vote to move this bill forward. The bad news is there are enough democrats and independents to provide 60 votes. They are not there yet but it seems likely they will be.

As we learned more about the specifics of the bill that is likely to pass, I couldn't help but feel like I woke up in an alternate reality. I cannot for the life of me figure out why anybody thinks this is a good idea.

A few key points:

- They propose to extend Medicare - which is projected to go broke in less than a decade - to people as young as 55. At the same time they're cutting Medicare reimbursements by \$500 billion dollars. The resulting cost shift will be staggering.
- The bill includes a complicated array of "pay to play" employer mandates that will force employers to provide government-approved health insurance or face new fines i.e. taxes.
- The bill includes massive new tax increases on everything from medical devices to health insurance premiums that will drive UP the cost of health care and premiums
- Even with all the new taxes, the bill still adds trillions to the deficit in coming years. Their claims to the contrary are based on an accounting

gimmick. They start collecting taxes next year, but don't start spending the big bucks for 5 years. That way, when they analyze the first 10 years, they can count 10 years of revenue and only 5 years of expenditures. The cost for the 10 years starting in 2015 is \$2.5 trillion dollars. It's hard to imagine what the affect on the economy, taxes and the deficit will be.

- The bill has far reaching implications that no one begins to understand. It is over 2,000 pages long and has been written in a few short weeks. It will expand the reach of the federal government into our personal and business lives in a life-changing way.
- According to the CBO, when all of this is in place there will still be 24 million uninsured Americans and health care costs will continue to rise at twice the cost of inflation. There will be no medical liability reform and none of the cost saving measures the business community have asked for will be included.

Elections have consequences and the likely passage of this health care "reform" legislation is one of them.

Personally, I am more concerned about the future of this great nation than I have ever been in my life. This is a game changer - and not in a good way.

Maybe we can undo it after another election cycle or two, but for today, I'm hoping all of you, and millions more, will see that we have walked to the edge of the abyss. If we don't stand up against the people who are dismantling the greatest force for prosperity and freedom the world has ever known - free enterprise - I'm afraid we will not recognize this country a decade from now.

If you've never contacted your Members of Congress before, this is the time. Tell them to please vote against the health care reform legislation. It's time to start over.

Thanks for all you do,

Doug Newman, Chairman - Board of Directors  
Newman Concrete Services, Inc.

**Maine's Congressional Delegation** (click on each name to access constituent e-mail service)

[Senator Olympia J. Snowe](#)

[Senator Susan M. Collins](#)

[Rep. Chellie Pingree](#)

[Rep. Michael H. Michaud](#)