New York Health Act
(S.3577-Rivera/A.5248-Gottfried)

Memorandum of Opposition

The New York Health Act (Bill S.3577-Rivera/A.5248-Gottfried) would create a government-controlled single-payer health insurance system in the State of New York.

If this bill were passed, most private health insurance would no longer be allowed in New York. Instead, all New Yorkers would be eligible for enrollment in a New York Health program that would pay everyone's medical bills. New York Health would be paid for "through a progressively-graduated payroll-based tax...and a progressively-graduated tax based on other taxable income, such as capital gains, interest and dividends." The bill irresponsibly fails to lay out the nuts and bolts of the funding for this costly proposal, leaving it to the Governor to submit a specific revenue plan later.

New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms opposes the New York Health Act for several important reasons. First, the Act would likely lead to poorer health outcomes. Research shows that people on Medicaid are generally not in better health than people who have no health insurance at all. The New York Health Act would create a Medicaid-like system for everyone, with corresponding results. Second, the New York Health Act would give government a huge incentive to pressure practitioners into rationing care for cost control purposes. If private health insurance were no longer available, high-cost patients—including the elderly, persons with disabilities, and persons with terminal illnesses—would have no other options if the government refused to provide coverage for their care and treatment. Third, the Act would endanger religious liberty; under the Act, government would likely pressure faith-based health care providers into engaging in acts that violate their beliefs or leaving the health care field altogether. Fourth, the massive tax increases that would be required to fund this proposal would harm the state by motivating both employers and employees to move elsewhere.

There is no doubt that the current health insurance system is flawed. However, a government takeover of health insurance would be much, much worse.