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IDEAS LAW

How Obamacare Just Made Filing Your Taxes Worse

Nathan Nascimento | April 5, 2016



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Millions of Americans may be penalized for not purchasing health insurance

It's that wonderful time of year again: tax season. Some 150 million American businesses and individuals are expected to file taxes by this month...

But this filing season is the second in which Americans may have yet another—and bigger—tax bill to worry about: the one forced on us by the Affordable Care Act.

While the Affordable Care Act's tax increases are many, two are front and center this month: the individual and employer mandates.

Start with the individual mandate, which is one of the most controversial provisions of the Affordable Care Act—and for good reason.

This mandate requires every American to be covered by a health insurance policy that complies with the law's labyrinthine coverage requirements and restrictions.

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That's bad news for millions already living paycheck-to-paycheck. The 2015 penalty—which is being assessed now—is \$325 per adult and \$162.50 per child...

That is money many families just don't have. According to December 2015 estimates from the Kaiser Family Foundation, the average household without compliant coverage faces \$661 in tax penalties for 2015...

That's a raw deal, especially as the Affordable Care Act has done nothing to lower insurance costs like its supporters claimed. In fact, a new study by my organization using the White House's own data found premiums for employer-sponsored health plans...

And that's just the individual mandate. There's also the employer mandate, which is limiting career opportunities for workers across the country.

The employer mandate went into effect in 2015, forcing employers with 100 or more full-time employees to provide health insurance to most of their workers, and expanding to those with more than 50 employees beginning this year.

That's not an option for many employers struggling through a sluggish economy. For some, staying in business requires reducing the number of employees covered by the mandate.

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This isn't speculation—it's already happening. A New York Times report documented public school districts that began cutting hours as far back as 2014, while many community colleges and universities have done the same for adjunct faculty.

Such is the result of a federal health-care law that favors government mandates and restrictions over patient choice and control. While the Affordable Care Act has failed to bend down the cost curve of health insurance, it has increased taxes on families and businesses alike.

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