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By ROBERT PIERCE • Daily Leader Late Sunday, members of the U.S. House of Representatives narrowly voted to approve a new health care package for the nation.

Tuesday morning, President Barack Obama signed the historic \$938 billion health care overhaul, which will reportedly provide coverage for 32 million uninsured Americans.

None of the “yes” votes, however, came from Republican congressmen, and a majority of people across the country agree with the party’s stand against the proposed bill. Among those is a legislator, and physician, from Kansas, state senator Jim Barnett (R-Emporia), who said the legislation Obama signed needs to be repealed as soon as possible.

“We need to start over,” the senator said. “We need common sense legislation. The package passed through Congress and signed by Obama will cut Medicare, while expanding Medicaid.”

Barnett said the legislation will cut a half trillion dollars from the federal Medicare system.

“Seniors have already paid in to that system and deserve the coverage they’ve paid for,” he said. “I believe it’s wrong to place a heavy burden on seniors to create yet a new government entitlement. I believe the more entitled we become as a nation, the weaker we become as a nation.”

Barnett has a practice in Emporia, and while he took an oath to do no harm, he believes the Obama package will do more harm than good.

“We should focus on reform efforts that deal with affordability and accessibility,” he said.

“Obama care will wedge bureaucrats between patients and physicians. We should look at tort reform and ways to decrease the practice of defensive medicine that drives the cost of health care.”

Barnett said modern medicine focuses on the need to practice defensive medicine, and Obama care will lead to European levels of taxation.

“We do not have the money to pay for the plan, and ultimately, it will lead to rationing of health care in America,” he said.

Barnett said the true cost of the health care package passed Sunday will be much greater than estimated by Obama and the Democrats who supported the bill.

“When you include the cost of mandated Medicaid expansion and additional discretionary

spending for grants and public programs, the baseline cost of this bill will be about \$1.33 trillion," he said. "With the additional grants and various agencies that would be created to implement the bill, the true cost once fully implemented will be more than \$2.6 trillion."

Barnett said he believes the legislation will forever change health care in America, and many doctors nearing retirement will either quit their practice or stop taking Medicare patients.

"I also believe this will cause a chilling effect with young people who are considering health care as a physician," he said

Barnett said the package fails to address the underlying problems of the health care industry, and costs, as well as premiums, will increase significantly.

"The way the bill is written, premiums will increase, including for young people," he said. "The Obama care package will increase the cost of health care for young Americans, and then the government wants to turn around and subsidize them. That's crazy."

Barnett said he feels a number of suits will be filed by states across the country examining the constitutionality of Obama care. He, however, has not received any reports of Kansas Attorney General Stephen Six's desires to participate in such suits.

"I'm sure other states will, and those decisions will ultimately be determined by the Supreme Court of the United States," Barnett said.

Barnett concluded by saying Sunday's vote was a step in the wrong direction for American health care.

"I think Washington and this 2,700-page bill is a runaway train that expands government control and will ultimately wedge a bureaucrat between the patient and their doctor," he said.

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