

The Truth About The Seattle Times Truth Needle

The primary assertion in the ad involves Jan Angel's sponsorship of HB 1361 from 2011. The state legislative website lists "Sponsors: Representatives Schmick, Hinkle, Bailey, McCune, Warnick, Short, Haler, Taylor, Kristiansen, **Angel**, Johnson, Condotta, Klippert"

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=1361&year=2011>

Note that the legislative website lists "Sponsors" plural.

In order to become a sponsor on a bill, a legislator must sign a card, which is then kept on file with the code reviser's office. Here is a full list of bills Angel sponsored in 2011-2012, including HB 1361.

<http://dlr.leg.wa.gov/searchresults/default.aspx?id=4¶ms=21,14208,%20,12/12/2010&desc=JAJOFR8EXgAensP%2bUp18kpUO5VbodDFB%2bLdGmyBqdBM10J4nt7woGw%3d%3d&bienString=2011-12>

In regard to the merits of the bill, HB 1361 would have removed the state requirement that insurance plans cover mammogram screenings and many other procedures. Washington state protections that HB 1361 sought to repeal afforded broader protections including no restrictions based on age, immigration or frequency. Without this requirement, insurance companies would be able to deny coverage for mammograms, as they do in other states. Angel's defense is that the ACA would have required coverage for mammograms and this was merely an effort to sync the laws. This leaves out several critical facts.

1. The ACA does not cover women under 40-years-old, nor does it cover immigrant women. Washington's law covered both. <http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/doctor-visits/screening-tests/get-tested-for-breast-cancer>
2. Angel and the other sponsors of HB 1361 were outspoken opponents of the ACA. In fact, Angel sponsored legislation to prevent the use of funds to implement the ACA <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=1804&year=2011>. Angel voted against the real legislation that would get state laws ready for the ACA: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=5122&year=2011>. Clearly Angel and the other sponsors of HB 1361 wouldn't work to prepare state laws for the ACA while simultaneously fighting it. In addition, this press release from another sponsor of HB 1361 shows that he believes we shouldn't do anything else to prepare for it: <http://houserepublicans.wa.gov/news/health-care/proposed-legislation-would-prohibit-the-use-of-state-funds-for-implementation-of-obamacare/>
3. It's important to remember that in early 2011, the ACA was not assured of implementation. A federal court had just struck down part of the law and it was unclear how the Supreme Court would rule. In addition, if Mitt Romney had won in 2012, he would have likely undermined or overturned the ACA. If any of these scenarios had played out - as Angel had hoped - her bill would have allowed insurance companies to deny coverage for mammograms.

Angel was one of only 13 legislators to sponsor this legislation, making her a leader in the effort. Voting for a bill is one thing, but adding your name as a sponsor demonstrates a much higher level of involvement and leadership on the issue.

In addition, our phrase "eliminate coverage for mammograms" is tied to the same bill. Coverage for mammograms was not universal, which is why it was such an important provision in the ACA. If Angel's bill had passed, women who were not covered by the mammogram provision in the ACA, specifically women under 40 and immigrant women, could have lost insurance coverage that was protected under the state provision that HB1361 was seeking to repeal. This could have resulted in the elimination of mammograms coverage for thousands of Washington women.