

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (MO-08) today expressed concern that the Obama Administration has now issued more than 1,000 waivers for groups seeking exemption from the \$750,000 coverage minimums established in the Affordable Care Act.

"The Department of Health and Human Services clearly recognizes that this part of the bill removes health insurance options from the table, taking coverage away from people who cannot afford alternative policies. The health care law has serious potential to increase insurance premiums and limit choices, but the Obama Administration has refused to acknowledge the dire ramifications of the law they wrote. These rules are costing Americans their health care coverage today. Even those lucky to get an exemption must come back in one year to plead their case again," Emerson said.

Two House committees are investigating the waivers, which critics say constitutes special treatment for many organizations which offer limited health insurance.

"The reason limited health insurance exists is that these plans are less expensive than those with no limit. Whether eliminating these types of plans was intended or an unintended consequence of the Obama health care bill, it is very obvious that the law is limiting affordable insurance choices by forcing Americans out of the plans they are in today," Emerson said. "Some are getting waivers from the Administration while others are not, and the President should not be picking winners and losers by granting arbitrary exemptions from his own rules."

Some 2.6 million people are covered by the plans which have been issued waivers, and The Hill quotes Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sibelius as saying, "We don't want to take away peoples' health insurance before they have some realistic other choices."

Emerson responds by pointing out that, "this plan was sold to the American public as 'if you like your insurance you can keep it' but now the Secretary is telling us she has decided she doesn't want to take Americans' health insurance away from them just yet. The enormity of power over our health care system passed to the federal government in this legislation remains the major reason why I have opposed the law at every turn."