

"As the House of Representatives charts a fiscal course for the country, there is one thing I know we should not be spending taxpayers' hard-earned money on: the health care mandate.

Last week, I offered an amendment to legislation which will fund the operations of the federal government through the rest of the year. My amendment is simple enough. It says the Internal Revenue Service cannot spend any money to enforce the individual mandate to carry insurance which is contained in the health care bill.

It is the first in my many efforts to prevent the health care law from being implemented, coming between patients and their doctors, hurting jobs and directing a windfall to the name-brand pharmaceuticals and big insurance companies who lobbied so hard to get this bill.

Why start at the IRS? A look at President Obama's FY 2012 budget request for the IRS offers ample evidence. U.S. News and World Report found that the budget asks for \$359 million and 1,054 new employees at the IRS to fund the requirements of the health care bill - and that is just for 2012. And the IRS freely admits that the Affordable Care Act contains the biggest set of changes to the tax law in more than 20 years.

The provision of the health care law dealing only with an additional tax on Americans who visit tanning salons will cause the IRS to hire 81 new full time employees at a cost of \$11.5 million. Their job description will be to focus on the tax reporting of 25,000 U.S. tanning salons - many of them small businesses. Yes, the IRS is targeting individual sectors of our economy for enforcement of the health care law.

But the individual mandate enables the IRS to do to ordinary Americans the same basic thing it plans to do in individual economic sectors. Thousands of IRS agents will be directed to the task of filtering through Americans' individual tax returns to discover whether or not they are in compliance with the health care law. They will audit documents and question taxpayers, and their authority to do so rests on a single point of policy contained in the law: American citizens are required to buy this product, and can be punished by the federal government with taxes if they do not.

This is a new thing in our laws, and we do not yet know if the Constitution even allows it. Regardless of what the courts decide, we do know that this part of the law has already been ruled upon by the American people. We do not want and will not suffer a mandate from government to engage in specific economic activity. We will not give up our freedoms, surrender our free choices, or part with our hard-earned money to support a system of health care designed by and operated by a maze of governmental offices, boards, committees, commissions and bureaucracies.

Smaller government starts with less intrusion into the daily lives of U.S. citizens. The health care measure is exactly the opposite: more intrusion, more regulations, more power. The bill is a Goliath, to be sure, but amendments like mine to end the individual mandate may well be the best stone we've got."

