



The Daily Dish

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CHRISTOPHER HOLT | NOVEMBER 14, 2014

Despite the fact that bills approving Keystone XL will likely pass easily out of both chambers, the White House's view remains unchanged. According to [Fox News](#), White House Press Secretary Josh "Earnest stopped short of threatening a veto, but reiterated Obama's preference for evaluating the pipeline through a long-stalled State Department review." The White House continues to state that they will not make a decision until [Nebraska's Supreme Court](#) delivers its verdict.

Obamacare enrollment for small businesses is moving at a crawl this session. From [The Hill](#), "About 76,000 people have enrolled in the state-run exchanges, a dismal total that nearly guarantees that the Obama administration will miss its target for small businesses, according to a report by the nonpartisan General Accountability Office (GAO)..."

If you want small business growth, then slow down the regulations. A [new study](#) from AAF reveals that an average state employing a regulatory moratorium could add "15,600 jobs and create 2,800 new small businesses. In addition, a moratorium could increase total wages by more than \$129 million per quarter."

Eakinomics: HHS Takes "Moving the Goal Posts" to a Whole New Level— Guest Authored by Christopher Holt, AAF Director of Health Care Policy

On Monday, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released a five page [report](#) aimed at lowering expectations for Obamacare's second open enrollment period. Although really, how much lower can expectations get? Specifically HHS is projecting that total enrollment through the health insurance marketplace will be between 9 and 9.9 million people at the end of the open enrollment period kicking off this weekend.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated earlier this year that total enrollment after this open enrollment period would be [13 million](#). HHS wants you to think that projection is unreasonably high, but CBO's track record is pretty good so far. CBO originally projected that enrollment after the first year would be 7 million (they downgraded this figure to 6 million after the horrendous rollout). The White House pushed claims of over [8 million](#) signups earlier this year, but HHS now tells us the most recent numbers for 2014 put enrollment at 7.1 million—basically right where CBO originally said it would be.

HHS has a lot of arguments for why expectations should be lower than what CBO projects for year two, but there is nothing there that CBO didn't consider. The reality is that HHS is moving the goal post, either because they're still nervous after the original rollout fiasco, or because they want the final number to look like a bigger success than it otherwise would, or both. Moving the goal posts is a Washington tradition, but even the most brazen don't move them into the opposing end zone. HHS' effort to lower expectations for what success in year two looks like should be viewed with skepticism.

From the Forum

[An Analysis of Benchmark Premiums in Year 2 of the Affordable Care Act Exchanges](#) by Conor Ryan, AAF

Health Care Data Analyst

[Higher Wages, More Jobs and Business Growth Due to State Moratorium on Regulation](#) by Sam Batkins, AAF Director of Regulatory Policy; and Ben Gitis, AAF Policy Analyst