

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 103

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to urge the federal government to approve a block grant for the Medicaid program in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the federal government desires that states become laboratories of policy experimentation; and

WHEREAS, this State has a history of policy innovation in Medicaid as the TennCare program demonstrates; and

WHEREAS, the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Pub. L. 111-148, as amended, has created an inequity when persons with incomes between 100% and 400% of the federal poverty line are eligible for federal subsidies to obtain health insurance coverage but persons with incomes below 100% of the federal poverty line are ineligible for those subsidies and are left to the differing coverages of the various state Medicaid systems; and

WHEREAS, in fiscal year 1979-1980, Medicaid cost this State \$116,000,000, but TennCare now costs this State approximately \$3,400,000,000; and

WHEREAS, if the federal government were to block grant the same amount of federal funds now used to finance the TennCare program, this State could provide health insurance benefits to persons with incomes below 138% of the federal poverty line; and

WHEREAS, the block granting of federal Medicaid funds would convert the federal share of Medicaid funding for this State into an allotment tailored to meet this State's needs that is indexed for inflation and population growth; and

WHEREAS, the block granting of federal Medicaid funds would be revenue neutral to this State and to the federal government in the present and in the future without increasing the federal debt; and

WHEREAS, the block granting of federal Medicaid funds to this State is a worthy policy innovation that the federal government should approve for demonstration in this State under a new federal Section 1115 waiver under the Social Security Act; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that this body urges the United States Department of Health and Human Services to approve an expansion of Medicaid eligibility in the State of Tennessee by means of a block grant that would join federal and state funds to enable citizens of this State with incomes of less than 138% of the federal poverty line and persons covered under the existing TennCare II waiver to obtain health insurance coverage.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for transmittal to the Governor of Tennessee and the federal Secretary of Health and Human Services.