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# Healthcare: Just Political Rhetoric When It Comes To Small Businesses

By Paul A. Miller

The 2008 presidential election has been well underway for over a year now and yet there's been still no mention of how any candidate will meet the needs of small businesses when it comes to healthcare. Both Democratic candidates have been talking extensively about a "universal healthcare" type of approach to this issue, but the reality is, this is campaign rhetoric and nothing more.

I believe Hillary Clinton when she says she will aggressively push for universal healthcare for all Americans, but she doesn't indicate how she will pay for it. Senator Obama's so-called healthcare plan doesn't cover everyone and by all accounts wouldn't be much of a help to small businesses. And, on the Republican side, Senator McCain's plan offers few specifics and focuses more on concepts.

Neither party is talking in detail about how they plan to help small businesses provide affordable quality healthcare to their employees and their families. Why not? The answer is simple: Neither party sees small business as critical to their success or failure.

The closest small business came to genuine healthcare relief was when Association Health Plan legislation was working its way through Congress a couple of years ago. This is the one approach that really catered to the needs of small businesses, but

when this bill caught traction it was killed, ironically by the same people in each party who claim to be small business champions.

Until small businesses can find a wave of unity, similar to the wave Senator Obama has created in his presidential campaign, I don't expect to see this Congress or the next take up any plan to help small businesses gain access to the health insurance they need to stay competitive.

Rhetoric only goes so far and the current candidates are betting that the current rhetoric will get you to the polls to support them. After they have your vote, don't expect them to come to your defense. If I'm wrong I'll write a retraction, but history says otherwise. Just look at the lack of funding provided to the agency whose sole mission is to help and support small businesses, the Small Business Administration.

Healthcare reform for small businesses is possible, but not without the small business community tackling two key tasks to get their voices heard.

First, they need to find a common voice that will bring large groups of small businesses together to bring about the change they need. And, second, small business voters need to ask the tough questions of candidates and be prepared to vote only for those who are willing to step up with

concrete plans to support them. I'm not sure the small business community is ready for this, but it needs to get there quickly if progress on any level is to be achieved.

Only when you band together will you get the change you need. Healthcare reform for small business is possible, but it will take commitment and a concerted effort on the part of the people who stand to benefit most to make it happen. Are you ready?

Healthcare  
Reform for  
Small Businesses  
Is Possible.

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