

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

1615 H STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20062-2000
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July 7, 2015

The Honorable Charles Boustany
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Thompson
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Boustany and Thompson:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations, and dedicated to promoting, protecting, and defending America's free enterprise system, thanks you for introducing H.R. 2911, the "Small Business Healthcare Relief Act." This bill would allow businesses with fewer than 50 full-time equivalent employees to offer health reimbursement arrangements (HRAs) without being penalized under the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) insurance reform requirements.

Permitting small employers to set aside tax-preferred dollars to help employees either pay the premiums for individual health plans or pay for other qualified medical expenses would help ensure access to coverage and services. Currently, employers that offer stand-alone HRAs to their employees face a \$100 per-day, per-employee fine. Not allowing small businesses the ability to offer these plans will hurt the employees of smaller employers that are not subject to the employer responsibility provision. H.R. 2911 would allow those small employers that are not subject to the employer mandate to offer HRAs to their employees. This bill would give small employers the ability to provide money to their employees to pay for coverage or qualified medical expenses, while at the same time allowing employees the flexibility to choose the health care coverage that works best for them.

The Chamber has long supported permitting all employers to offer stand-alone HRAs to help employees pay for coverage and/or health care services. The Chamber applauds your leadership in introducing H.R. 2911 and looks forward to working with you to enact this legislation so that small businesses can provide employees with tax-preferred dollars to purchase coverage and pay for qualified medical expenses. This bill is an important first step in restoring flexibility to all businesses and their employees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bruce Josten", written in a cursive style.

R. Bruce Josten