

# KEY FEDERAL ISSUES

## Health Care

### Summary

The misleadingly-named Affordable Health Care for America Act and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act include:

- New government-run or government-sponsored health plans
- Expansion of Medicare, Medicaid and SCHIP to cover more Americans
- A mandate that every American purchase health insurance
- A mandate that employers either provide coverage or pay a tax to subsidize government coverage
- Taxes on individuals and small businesses
- Elimination of cost-effective ERISA plans and health savings accounts

### Impact

If enacted, these bills would:

- Prompt employers to drop coverage, dumping millions of Americans onto government plans
- Use “comparative effectiveness” research to deny treatments the government deems too expensive
- Prevent patients from choosing their provider and cut provider payments
- Put quality providers out of business and discourage development of new drugs and treatments
- Result in the rationing of care, reduced access to treatment, longer waiting periods, lower survival rates, higher worker absenteeism and poorer overall health and mortality
- Fail to control costs, spurring new taxes on businesses and consumers

### Status

Passed by the House on Nov. 7 (220-215); Senate vote expected by the end of 2009

## Climate Change

### Summary

The creatively-named American Clean Energy and Security Act and the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act include:

- A cap-and-trade program to regulate carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions
- A mandate for greater use of renewable energy sources
- A “smart grid” to store energy from intermittent wind and solar power
- Energy efficiency mandates for utilities, buildings, vehicles, etc.
- Subsidies for “clean” energy projects and “green” jobs
- A carbon tariff on foreign manufacturers and importers

### Impact

If enacted, the bill would:

- Impose an energy tax of up to \$300 billion a year on businesses and consumers
- Hike energy costs for businesses in all sectors, eliminating a key Georgia edge in economic development
- Destroy up to 2.5 million jobs a year, including thousands in Georgia
- Hike energy costs for the average household by at least \$1,500 a year
- Inflate the cost of food and anything else produced with electricity or delivered by truck
- Punish states like Georgia, whose nuclear, hydro and biofuel sources don't count as “clean/renewable”
- Give nations like China and India an economic advantage over Georgia and the entire United States

### Status

Passed by the House on June 26 (219-212); Senate vote expected to follow

## Unionization

### Summary

The artfully-named Employee Free Choice Act includes provisions that would:

- Substitute signed employee authorization cards for the current secret ballot election process used to organize a union in the workplace
- Mandate binding federal arbitration if a business and union cannot agree to contract terms within as few as 90 days
- Create new and costly penalties to be imposed on businesses, not unions, for illegal intimidation

### Impact

If enacted, the bill would:

- Eliminate the time-honored secret ballot election process in the workplace
- Put workplace conditions and employment contract terms in the hands of a federal arbitrator
- Trample property rights by requiring businesses to provide workplace access to union organizers
- Subject businesses but not unions to costly fines for certain workplace violations
- Pre-empt Georgia's right-to-work law and its competitive advantages in attracting and retaining business
- Destroy an estimated 600,000 existing jobs for every 1.5 million new union members

### Status

Legislation introduced in the House and Senate on March 10. Bills referred to respective labor committees; no hearings scheduled

(December 7, 2009)