



STATE OF ARKANSAS

House of Representatives

May 13, 2020

REPRESENTATIVE

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DISTRICT 66

Counties:

- Part Cleburne
- Part Faulkner
- Part Van Buren

COMMITTEES

Public Health, Welfare and Labor
Chairperson, Labor and Environment
Subcommittee

State Agencies and Governmental
Affairs
Constitutional Issues Subcommittee

Joint Performance Review

Legislative Council

Dear Leader David, Speaker McCall, Leader Echols, and other Republican Members of the Oklahoma Legislature,

In light of Oklahoma’s consideration of Medicaid expansion, I write to briefly share Arkansas’ experience. I will be candid—and hope to convey my sense of urgency. I cannot stress enough my primary takeaway from Arkansas’ Medicaid program in recent years: expanding Medicaid to able-bodied adults is a raw deal. Let me explain.

Those who supported Medicaid expansion made lots of promises: increased federal funding to support our state budget, greater access to care for the needy, and relief for rural hospitals. But Arkansas is in a worse position today than before because these grand promises were built on the broken foundation of ObamaCare.

Instead, enrollment and costs shattered projections. Waste and fraud is more difficult to detect. Some of our rural hospitals are still struggling and a few have even closed. Greater costs are being shifted to the remaining Arkansans who pay higher private insurance premiums. More Arkansans are trapped in welfare dependency. And the truly needy—like those with physical and developmental disabilities who require home-based care—face long waiting lists and reduced services while able-bodied, working-age adults move to the front of the line.

In short, expansion was a big mistake for Arkansas.

In times of uncertainty like the COVID-19 pandemic, knowledge is power. And I know the experiences of neighbors, who have had to learn from their mistakes, can provide the most useful knowledge. Arkansas and Oklahoma share more than a border. Our cultures, economies, and enduring public policy challenges have much in common. If you want to avoid the mistakes of our state, I urge you to reject Medicaid expansion.

Sincerely,

Josh Miller

AR State Representative Dist. 66