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*Your Home
Is Our
Business*

To the editor:

In their rush to deliver a health care bill by Christmas, Senate Democrats inserted an 11th hour jobs-killing provision unfairly singling out the construction industry, threatening the viability of small home building firms and countless others across the nation.

This provision requires small construction industry companies with five or more workers to offer health care coverage to their workers – the same mandate required for big businesses with multi-million dollar payrolls – or face stiff fines. Meanwhile, the mandatory health care threshold for companies in all other industries is 50 or more workers.

This provision is clearly unfair and economically dangerous. The construction industry is already dealing with an unemployment rate of more than 18 percent and more than \$200 billion in economic activity already lost in the past year. The majority of home building firms in Connecticut and across the country are small "mom and pop" businesses, employing less than a dozen workers. This provision would add a greater burden to companies struggling to stay in business amidst the worst housing downturn in decades.

Do no harm is the guiding principle that all doctors abide by. In crafting health care legislation, Congress must apply this concept to America's small businesses, the backbone of our economy. The homes and jobs created by home building and related industries are vital to the state and the nation's economy. If this provision targeting the construction industry is enacted, many small builders could be forced to shutter their doors and increasing unemployment, and further delaying recovery. The consequences for housing and the economy are incalculable.

George LaCava,
President, HBA of CT