

## Senators Introduce Small Business Health Insurance Act

By Administrator  
Wednesday, 20 February 2019 11:04 -

---

Senators Joyce Krawiec (R-Forsyth), Dan Bishop (R-Mecklenburg), Chuck Edwards (R-Henderson) and Ralph Hise (R-Mitchell) introduced the Small Business Health Care Act which would provide small businesses with a cost-effective option to offer their employees health insurance plans that would include many state and federal consumer protections, including the requirement to cover those with preexisting conditions.

The bill would loosen the current restrictions on Association Health Plans (AHPs), which allow groups of small businesses to band together for insurance policies. This would allow those small businesses to receive the same health benefits as large corporations.

**“Between reducing the tax burden and improving the state’s business climate, we have instituted a number of policies since 2011 that have allowed small businesses to thrive, yet so many of them are still unable to afford health insurance,”** said Bishop. **“This bill is the missing piece of that puzzle that makes high-quality health coverage for employees an affordable option for small business owners.”**

A June 2018 ruling by the U.S. Department of Labor paved the way for these changes by loosening Obama-era restrictions on AHPs that were designed to force more small businesses onto the costly small-group market. The Small Business Health Care Act would take advantage of these loosened restrictions and amend North Carolina’s insurance code by doing the following:

- Allow small employers, including people who are self-employed and sole proprietors, to join an AHP
- Allow small businesses from the same or different industries to join an AHP
- Allow small businesses located in North Carolina, and business located in bordering states to join the same AHP.
- Reduce the period of time that an AHP has to be in existence in North Carolina to offer health benefits to its members from five years to two.

**“This bill would put small businesses on a more level playing field with large companies, making it possible for them to offer more attractive benefits packages to recruit the best and brightest talent,”** said Krawiec.

## Senators Introduce Small Business Health Insurance Act

By Administrator

Wednesday, 20 February 2019 11:04 -

---

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, these modifications to North Carolina's insurance code could potentially benefit up to 110,000 North Carolinians.