

On steps of US Supreme Court support for health care ruling is strong

Washington (dpa) - Cheering as she descended the steps of the US Supreme Court, Gwen Jackson was met at the foot of the steps by a few dozen supporters of the Affordable Care Act. Waving signs and chanting "ACA is here to stay," they gathered Thursday at the court ahead of the court's 6-3 decision to keep the health care law intact.

Jackson traveled to Washington from her home in Sugar Land, Texas, to show support as one of the millions of people who have been able to buy health care insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

She said she needed the subsidies under attack by the lawsuit to afford health insurance, which covered her self-employed husband's extensive surgeries to remove a tumour from his jawbone. She said that Thursday's decision is important not only for her, but also the millions of others in America who use the subsidies.

"We are thankful today that the courts upheld this, and realized that affordable care is ... for everyone," Jackson said. "ACA is here to stay and I thank God for that."

While people at the court delighted in the ruling, many conservatives were upset with the way the Supreme Court justices interpreted the law, specifically Chief Justice John Roberts, who was the deciding vote in the previous health care lawsuit.

"Roberts now thinks it is his job to re-write the unambiguous language of the law to achieve a certain outcome: the radical leftist dream of socialized medicine," said American Conservative Action Chairman Matt Schlapp in a statement.

"Justice Roberts and the other concurring five justices have disgraced their office, sprayed graffiti on the Constitution, and set America on a path toward a constitutional crisis."

But at the steps of the court sentiments were overwhelmingly positive about the ruling.

Ann Marie Benitez of the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health in Washington went to the court once she heard the decision to celebrate "what we already know: that the ACA is working."

The Affordable Care Act is an important issue to her group, but she said that ACA is also important to her family and critical to her husband's cancer treatment.

"I was in a situation where not all of us had access to health care, and we were really concerned about my husband's health," Benitez said. "Thankfully it worked out. We found out he had cancer, and we got health insurance."

Members from left-leaning activist group the Center for American Progress Action Fund made up most of the group celebrating the Affordable Care Act decision. The associate director of communications for the group, Benton Strong, said after the decision that it was a "good day for health care in America."

He said that the group got together to vocalize their support, and to represent the millions of people who couldn't be there that day.

"It's for the 6 million people who get their tax credits through the federally facilitated market place," Strong said. "That's always been the centre of this decision, whether or not people in 34 states would be able to maintain access to affordable health care."

He hopes the decision marks the end of partisan battles against the Affordable Care Act.

"This has been a five-year effort by the Republican party to try to undermine the Affordable Care Act," Strong said. "This is the second time it's been in this building, both times the court has upheld it. I hope this is the end of it."

But the fight may be far from over as most Republican presidential candidates said they would work to continue to fight Obamacare, as it is known, and work to repeal it.

Candidate Jeb Bush said that if he were president he would make fixing the health care system one of his top priorities.

Bush said he was disappointed by the ruling, but "this decision is not the end of the fight against Obamacare."

Republican candidate Ted Cruz said that "any candidate not willing to make 2016 a referendum on repealing ObamaCare should step aside."