

Dear reader,

We've had several great highlights these past two weeks. Read about them below, and if you have a few extra minutes, please help us win \$5,000 in the GreatNonprofits contest (details in #1 below).

1. [Help ProCon.org Win \\$5,000](#): Write a short review of ProCon.org by Feb. 28 for a contest at GreatNonprofits.org. The most-reviewed nonprofit wins, so please take a few minutes and help us compete for the prize!

2. Health Care Reform: [Brief History of the Individual Health Insurance Mandate, 1989-2010: Republican Origins of Democratic Health Care Provision](#)

Republicans oppose the Mar. 2010 health care laws for many reasons, especially its provision to include an individual health care mandate which many of them find unconstitutional. However, the idea of an individual mandate originated with the conservative Heritage Foundation in 1989, and in 1993, two different Republican-introduced health care reform bills contained an individual mandate.

In 2008, Barack Obama opposed the mandate, and in 2009 he fought for its acceptance. Read more about this legislative history and see which congressional representatives who currently find the health care mandate unconstitutional previously supported legislation containing such a provision.

3. Medical Marijuana: [13 States with Pending Legislation to Legalize Medical Marijuana](#)

Since our last update on this issue, four more states (Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, and West Virginia) have introduced legislation to legalize medical marijuana. See if your state is on the list, and check the latest status of the bills being introduced.

4. Health Care Reform: [Health Care Reform Opinion Polls/Surveys](#)

A Jan. 15-19, 2011 poll by CBS and the New York Times found that 40% of Americans want to repeal the March 2010 health care law while 48% want to let it stand. A Dec. 14-15 FOX News poll found that 59% of respondents want to repeal all or part of the law while 31% want to expand it or keep it as is. See our chart of 10 polls taken between Apr. 2009 and Jan. 2011 concerning health care reform.

5. Gay Marriage: [Barack Obama Declares Defense of Marriage Act Unconstitutional](#)

On Feb. 23, 2011, President Obama directed the Department of Justice to stop defending in court the law that prevents gay marriage.

6. Teachers and librarians, if you have not already done so, [please take two minutes to share your thoughts on ProCon.org by completing our online survey.](#)

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7. Vaccines: [Supreme Court Rules in Vaccines Case](#)

On Feb. 22, 2011, the US Supreme Court ruled that vaccine injury claims must continue to be filed with the US Court of Federal Claims and cannot be filed directly against physicians or vaccine manufacturers in civil court.

Please remember to help us win that \$5,000 contest, and thanks as always for your ongoing interest in our nonpartisan research.

Sincerely,

Kamy Akhavan

President & Managing Editor, ProCon.org

"Promoting Critical Thinking, Education, and Informed Citizenship"

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233 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 200 | Santa Monica, CA 90401 US

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