

Why casino workers hate Obamacare

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 11 March 2014 21:54 -



Las Vegas casino workers may strike if their employers don't cover Obamacare fees.

NEW YORK (CNNMoney)

Culinary Workers Union Local 226 is pushing about a dozen of its employers to contribute more money to its health insurance fund to cover rising Obamacare costs.

Currently, employers pay 100% of the premiums. The union, which is in contract negotiations, wants to keep it that way. But the spike Obamacare-related expenses could make it tougher to convince employers to pony up more money.

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Union workers picketed outside the Stratosphere over the weekend, ahead of a March 20 vote that would give the union the right to call a strike.

At issue are Obamacare fees and mandates that have greatly increased the health insurance fund's expenses in recent years. What's angering the local, along with many unions nationwide, is that the fund doesn't qualify for [federal subsidies](#) to cover low-income workers that for-profit insurers do. The union fund wants these subsidies to help offset the added costs.

Those subsidies, which go directly to insurers, help lower-income Americans purchase insurance on the individual market through state and federal exchanges. But since union plans are considered employer-sponsored plans, there is no federal money to subsidize its members.

So far, White House officials have not made an exception for the unions.

"The administration has made change after change to meet other groups' needs," said Yvanna Cancela, the local's political director, noting the union would like to see the president keep his promise. "Our members want to keep their health plans."

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Many unions, who supported President Obama's push for health reform, feel betrayed because the administration failed to accommodate their health insurance funds in the Affordable Care Act. These plans, called Taft-Hartley funds for the regulations that govern them, cover 20 million Americans and pool contributions from multiple employers to provide health and pension benefits for their members.

The Local 226 fund provides health insurance for about 55,000 kitchen workers, housekeepers, bartenders, bellman, porters, laundry workers and others, as well as 70,000 dependents. Employers contribute \$3.96 per worker per hour to cover health and pension benefits. Workers don't pay a premium, but are responsible for about 10% of their out-of-pocket medical costs.

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<http://www.foxnews.com/story/2014/03/11/why-casino-workers-hate-obamacare>