

By Jan Schultz, The Imperial Republican News Editor

If you've been reading U.S. Sen. Mike Johanns' columns the past three weeks in this newspaper, you noticed they have expressed grave concerns about President Obama's push for a government-funded health insurance program.

Of particular interest to me was the "numbers game" the administration is playing with regard to how many really have no options for health coverage.

□ The number of Americans not insured has been spiked at 47 million by the White House.

□ Johanns said the realistic number is closer to 12 million.

□ He makes a strong case in his belief the uninsured numbers are inflated.

□ Johanns' research has found of the purported 47 million "uninsured," that some other numbers need to be taken into consideration:

□ • 10 million of the 47 million are eligible for other existing government program such as SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program) or Medicaid, but for some reason have not enrolled.

□ • 9 million of those "uninsured" earn \$75,000 or more per year, yet have chosen not to purchase health insurance.

□ • 6 million are eligible for their employer's health insurance, but have not enrolled for various reasons (which could include the fact their spouse has family coverage from his/her employer).

• Another 10.2 million do not have American citizenship.

Add those figures up, and it leaves about 12 million people who have no options for coverage.

No one is against providing those truly in need with new avenues to get health care coverage.

But, when we talk about such a major new expenditure as government health care, our representatives in D.C. should be using accurate figures.

While there may be more than the 12 million Johanns' figures show are truly without health care options, it certainly is not the 47 to 50 million that you here on all the news reports.

But, by using such large numbers, most caring U.S. citizens will believe it is a major, major crisis. If the 12 million is on target, the truly uninsured represents four percent of the 300 million Americans.

Health care and its cost are concerns, but let's get the figures correct.