



Democrats call Issa's Obamacare road show a 'destructive' political act

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(CNN) – The top Democrat on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee on Friday accused the panel's chairman of engaging in a "destructive political exercise" by launching a series of hearings on the road meant to highlight various flaws in the Affordable Care Act.

Maryland Rep. Elijah Cummings said in a written statement it's evident that Republicans are not invested in fixing the flawed federal health care website, and are instead trying to undermine President Barack Obama's signature legislative accomplishment.

Republicans have the "ultimate goal of tearing down the Affordable Care Act, promoting misinformation and eliminating health insurance for tens of millions of people," Cummings said. "The Committee should support constructive efforts to help educate and assist families who urgently need medical care and now have a chance to obtain it."

California GOP Rep. Darrell Issa, the panel's chairman, kicked off a series of four hearings Friday that will be held outside of Washington. Friday's hearing was in North Carolina – home of embattled Democratic Sen. Kay Hagan, who is up for re-election next year.

Issa will also hold field hearings over the next few weeks in Georgia, Texas and Arizona.

Cummings' statement asserted that local North Carolinians who requested permission to testify in support of the Affordable Care Act were denied the opportunity to do so by Issa's Committee. But Issa's office said Democrats didn't request witnesses at Friday's field hearing. No Democrats attended the event.

A slew of technical issues marred the initial launch of the federal government's online healthcare exchange, healthcare.gov, impeding countless attempts to sign up for health insurance coverage.

President Barack Obama admitted earlier this month that his administration "fumbled" the site's rollout, and promised significant improvements by the end of the month.

Democrats, however, have accused Issa and other GOP lawmakers of attacking the Affordable Care Act for purely political reasons. Among other things, Democrats insist Issa has selectively leaked administration documents and reports on healthcare.gov's launch in a way designed to make the rollout process look as terrible as possible.

Issa has issued several subpoenas to numerous Health and Human Services officials and technology officers, ordering them to testify about the botched rollout before his committee.