

## Sen. Brown again upset with foreclosure-aid effort

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BY JONATHAN RISKIND

First, Sen. Sherrod Brown was upset because the Obama administration left Ohio out of a foreclosure-assistance program. Now, the Ohio Democrat is steamed again because none of the money coming to Ohio can be used by legal-aid societies to help homeowners.

In March, the Treasury Department said it would send \$172 million to Ohio to help ease the housing-foreclosure problem. That came a month after Brown and other Ohio lawmakers and officials complained about the state being left out of a \$1.5 billion foreclosure-relief program aimed at helping Arizona, California, Florida, Michigan and Nevada.

But Brown is complaining again to Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, this time about his agency's decision that legal-aid societies shouldn't get any of the foreclosure-relief money. Ohio Poverty Law Center senior staff attorney Linda Cook said her organization estimated that legal-aid societies could help about 3,000 Ohio homeowners deal with legal problems associated with facing foreclosure - and produce

a "win-win" resolution

in which banks get paid

and people get to stay in their homes.

Brown said in a letter to Geithner last week: "Legal-aid services are immensely useful to homeowners who fall behind on their mortgage payments, sometimes because they are unable to access benefits like unemployment insurance. Foreclosure counseling is a

similarly vital service."

Brown's office said last week that he had not yet received a response from Geithner.

### Kilroy's promise of more doctor time questioned

Is one of the benefits of the new health-care reform a guarantee you can spend more time with your doctor?

A recent taxpayer-funded mailing by Rep. Mary Jo Kilroy, D-Columbus, asserts, in touting the benefits of the law to seniors, that it "ensures that you have access to and can spend more time with your primary care doctor "

The new law does attempt to increase access to primary-care doctors through such measures as a 10percent bonus payment for primary-care physician services, for five years beginning in 2011, and broader Medicare coverage of preventive health services with no cost-sharing, said Ed Howard, executive vice president of the nonprofit and nonpartisan Alliance for Health Reform.

But a promise that the new law means patients

will get to "spend more time" with their doctors

is questionable, he said.

Nothing in the law

"ensures you'll have an easier time seeing your

PC (primary care) doc,

or spend more time with him/her, but it should improve access somewhat," Howard said.

A Kilroy spokesman said the statement is based on information on the health-care law issued by the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Democratic members and the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Kilroy spokesman Joshua Rosenblum added that, according to information from the committee, which

helped write the law, "increased reimbursement for primary-care doctors allows them to spend more time with patients."

Kilroy spent \$377,713 on taxpayer-funded communications last year, placing her seventh among all House members.

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