

Senate Unveils Health Care Bill, McConnell Pushes To Vote Next Week



Summary: The GOP's latest health care bill has been revealed to Senate voters.

Republicans worked entirely in secret on the Senate health care bill, and on Thursday, the bill had a coming out party--finally being revealed to the public. This is the first time that the majority of the Senate GOP conference was finally able to read the health care proposal, which is the GOP-alternative to Obamacare.

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is pushing for a vote next week, according to *CNN*, and that means that senators only get a few days to review the bill, which would affect the healthcare of millions of Americans.

ABC News spoke to a few Republican senators who had just received the bill, and they overall sounded confident and excited to read it.

"A person making about \$12,000 a year will have more access and a lower cost of health insurance. And that's a really good thing," Senator Tim Scott from South Carolina said.

Their Democratic counterparts, however, seemed displeased. Senator Chuck Schumer, the Senator Minority Leader, said that the new bill was "every bit as bad" as the American Health Care Act passed in the House.

"The president said the Senate bill needed heart. The way this bill cuts health care is heartless," Schumer said. "The president said the House bill was mean. The Senate bill may be meaner."

CNN reported that the bill is similar to the draft that the House had passed last month, but the publication said there were a few major changes. Similarities include repealing Obamacare's individual mandate, defunding Planned Parenthood, and cutting back federal support of Medicaid, but changes between the House and Senate bill include:

- The Senate bill will continue the Medicaid expansion funding from Obamacare until the year 2021. After that, Medicaid will phase out over three years.
- People earning up to 350% above the poverty line will be eligible for health insurance subsidies. With Obamacare, people who are 400% above the poverty line are eligible.
- The Senate bill opted to keep Obamacare's subsidies to prevent funds from being used for abortions.

The secrecy of this latest draft was intentional, according to *CNN*. McConnell's strategy was to work without criticism until the bill was ready, and the publication said that he "has very little room for error" because he can only lose two Republican votes and get the bill passed.

Last month, the House had passed another version of the bill, and while Republicans like Paul Ryan celebrated the event, President Donald Trump condemned the reform behind closed doors as "mean." However, he seems to like the Senate's version. At a White House "Emerging Technology" event on Thursday, Trump said, "It's going to be very good. A little negotiation but it's going to be very good."

It is unclear how the Senate will vote as lawmakers have seemed to be divided on health care policy in the past. Lawmakers are also waiting on the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report that outlines how much the new bill will cost the government.

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Source: *CNN*

What do you think of the Senate's new healthcare bill? Let us know in the comments below.

