House Passes ObamaCare Repeal

Furthermore, to the delight of constitutional conservatives everywhere, House Republicans have provided no substitute (watered down) version of ObamaCare as of yet. However, House Republicans are expected to also debate a measure instructing three House committees to create a substitute healthcare bill.

Democrats Dan Boren of Oklahoma and Mike McIntyre of North Carolina voted against their party in support of the repeal bill.

The repeal vote is believed to encourage conservative voters who saw the Obamacare repeal as a key issue during the midterm elections. Senate Democrats have vowed to block the GOP efforts, however.

According to MSNBC, "House Republicans say not to underestimate their determination or their willingness to use parliamentary maneuvers to deny the Obama administration funds needed to carry out the law."

Freshman Representative Nan Hayworth of New York asserts, "Our vote to repeal is not merely symbolic. It respects the will of the American people. And it paves the way to reform our health care."

This afternoon's contentious debate featured a number of passionate speakers, including Republican Representative Charlie Bass, who said, "This healthcare reform bill was a bad bill passed at the wrong moment. It is one of the big reasons we are facing economic uncertainty."

Democratic Representative Charles Gonzalez antagonized his Republican counterparts by remarking, "Taking your notes from 2009 and 2010 are stale and irrelevant today. I wonder why you would proceed with this measure as soon as you took the majority. Some say it's just political theater … but my guess is because time is not on your side…. You were wrong in 2009, you were wrong in 2010, and you're wrong today."

To Gonzalez, Republican Representative Michael Burgess responded, "The American people rejected this measure in November."

In addition to the outcome of the midterm elections, the latest Rasmussen poll shows the majority of Americans, approximately 60 percent, in favor of repeal.

While Democrats attempted to tout ObamaCare as a measure that would save money and jobs, Republicans targeted the law's exorbitant costs, its impact on the economy, and its impositions on the individual, small businesses, and the healthcare industry. Republican Representative Steve Scalise mocked the Democrats' assertions: "Anybody who contends that Obamacare would save jobs and money must be an Enron accountant."

Key Republicans and Democrats took the opportunity to speak as well, including House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) and former House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.).

Cantor targeted Democrat assertions that repealing ObamaCare would be more costly than maintaining it as "ridiculous."

The debate continued in much the same way until the final vote, which took place at approximately 5:30 pm.

Despite the passage of the healthcare repeal bill, Senators Harry Reid (the Majority Leader), Dick Durbin, and Charles Schumer sent a letter to House Speaker John Boehner indicating that there are no plans to debate the repeal legislation on the Senate floor. Obama also declares that he will veto the bill if it makes its way to his desk.

Not everyone is convinced that the bill will die in the Senate, however. Representative Steve King (R-Iowa) contends that the repeal legislation will pass in the Senate as well. If both houses were to pass the bill, President Obama is expected to use his veto power. Once that takes place, the Republicans plan to move on to the process of stopping the implementation of ObamaCare by defunding it.

House Majority Leader Eric Cantor states, "If we are unsuccessful in seeing the Senate take up the repeal bill and the president signing a repeal bill of Obamacare, we'll do everything we can to delay and 'de-fund' the provisions of the bill so that we can get some discussion going on how we can replace it, and come together on the agreement that we can't accept the status quo."

Congressional Quarterly reports, "House Republicans have begun work on specific bills intended to dismantle the healthcare law, knowing that a full repeal of the overhaul probably will go no farther than their own chamber. Some of the measures being written would open an interstate market for health insurance, boost tax deductions for healthcare and make other changes to fulfill the GOP's promise to 'repeal and replace' the overhaul."

According to constitutionalist groups like The John Birch Society, however, the option to "replace" Obamacare should be off the table. The group explains, "Obamacare must be repelealed to eliminate the vast, new, unconstitutional regulatory powers over our healthcare system. Don't 'repeal and replace,' just 'repeal,' period!"

Remarking on the repeal vote, President Obama declared that he is "willing and eager" to work with members of Congress to improve the law, but overall asserts "we can't go backward."

Photo of House Speaker John Boehner: AP Images

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