

House GOP Still Can't Muster the Votes for AHCA

Despite the fact nearly half of the conservative House Freedom Caucus announced beforehand they would begrudgingly vote for the failed RINOCare bill—the American Health Care Act—and that those remaining in opposition constituted less than a quarter of the legislation's opposition, they took much of the blame for its failure last month.

Following a series of meetings over the Easter recess, the House Freedom Caucus announced this week it was endorsing the AHCA 2.0 bill as a good first step in the process of repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. But late Thursday evening, House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) announced there would be no vote on the measure before the end of President Donald Trump's first 100 days in office.

"We are not voting on health care tomorrow," he said following a late-night meeting between Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and other members of the Republican leadership. "We're still educating members."

Democrats and the compliant liberal mainstream media hailed it as a bitter defeat for the president.

But, rather, this finally exposes the real problem the president and conservatives in Congress face as they try to dismantle the destructive elements of Obamacare. As has been the case all along, it is moderate Republicans—not the conservatives—who are to blame for the impasse in the House of Representatives.

Some observers are even saying the speaker is purposely failing to whip up the votes just to withhold a major victory from the president in his first 100 days.

Both Politico and The Hill have whip counts that show the GOP is about 50 votes short of having the necessary majority to pass the bill onto the Senate. Anything more than 30 votes will doom any legislation without help from the Democrats—and on this measure, that won't be coming, perhaps ever.

The biggest stumbling block seems to be over mandatory insurance coverage for Americans with preexisting conditions. Conservatives correctly note this is one of the biggest drivers of skyrocketing out-of-pocket expenses for most Americans, while moderate-liberal Republicans are wary of a constituent backlash if they agree to remove that provision.

The Trump administration is calling in its biggest gun, Vice President Mike Pence, to help secure the final votes necessary to get the legislation passed. He was on a diplomatic tour of the Asia-Pacific region, which was cut short to make him available to lobby on Capitol Hill. {eoa}