

It's Too Soon to Write the Obit on the GOP Health Care Bill

Senate GOP leadership announced there will be no vote on their version of the health care bill before the July 4th recess. The news comes after they failed to garner enough support in their party to bring the bill to the floor for debate.

But this is not the end of the road for the repeal and replace Obamacare legislation.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., pointed out that major actions like these are difficult.

Republican lawmakers have campaigned for years on repealing Obamacare, but now that they have the opportunity, they have to work hard to agree on what to replace it with.

"We're continuing to talk about it. It's a very complicated subject," continued McConnell. "I remember how challenging it was for the Democrats when they are enacting this back in 2009, 2010. It's a big complicated subject. We've got a lot of discussions going on and we're still optimistic we're going to get there."

McConnell is running into the same issue the House faced in the spring: crafting a health care plan that both conservative and moderates support.

Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., is one of the GOP senators on the conservative side who oppose the bill as it stands now. He told CBN News he met with President Donald Trump this week, who Paul says is open to negotiating the bill, but he hasn't heard from Senate leadership.

"If we could make the bill more of a repeal bill, I think I

could get to the point where I could support it," Paul told CBN News. "Right now I think we keep too many of the Obamacare regulations, we keep too many of the Obamacare subsidies, and we have a brand new big federal bailout of insurance companies.

"Those are going to have to get less bad and we're going to have to introduce maybe more choices for consumers so they can get cheaper insurance," he said.

On the other side are moderates like Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, who are concerned with Medicaid cuts and defunding Planned Parenthood.

"It makes absolutely no sense to eliminate federal funding for Planned Parenthood," Collins said on ABC's *This Week*.

Collins says she's optimistic she'll prevail on that issue, but Paul disagrees.

"I don't think we should have any federal money going to pay for abortions. Now they say they're not using it for abortions, but if they're using it to pay their electricity to perform abortions I think it's the same thing as far as I'm concerned," Paul reasoned.

"Planned Parenthood doesn't do anything that community health centers also do other than abortions. The bill actually gives more money for community health centers," he said.

And Paul says if senators want to include expanding Medicaid to cover more people for health insurance, they need to be honest with people about how they're going to pay for it.

"Everybody wants something. They think it should be free and they don't want to pay any taxes to get it, so that's what we have to decide. I think if you want Medicaid expansion there has to be an honest accounting of how we pay for it," Paul said.

While Republicans say Obamacare is in a death spiral, Democrats like Rep. John Garamendi of California argue it's failing because the future of the program is unclear under the Trump administration.

"The insurance companies look to the future, they say, 'What's the future going to be?,' and within that, they then structure their policies and set their price," Garamendi told CBN News.

"They have absolutely no idea what will happen," he said. "They can't set prices, they don't know if there's going to be a requirement for certain benefits or not, and so they're pulling out of the markets because they cannot price their product, they cannot write a contract and they say we can't be here without some certainty."

Republicans say Obamacare was collapsing before President Trump was elected and that they have no choice but to replace it before things get even worse.

The president is meeting with Republican senators this week to help gain support for the legislation and tweets that they really want to get it right.

Senate GOP leadership hopes that after negotiating and amending the bill, they'll have the votes needed to pass it soon. {eo}

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