

President Trump Calls Senate GOP to the White House

President Donald Trump, in his five-plus months in office, has made it clear he has no qualms will calling out the Republican-controlled Congress when he thinks he needs it.

Tuesday, after Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., announced a vote on the Better Care Reconciliation Act was cancelled for lack of support, the president invited the Senate Republican Conference—as in all 52 GOP members of the chamber—to come to the White House to discuss his hopes for repeal and replacement of Obamacare. And while those discussions were held behind closed doors, we probably have a good idea what was said based on how a similar meeting with Republican House members went during the discussions that led to passage of their own American Health Care Act.

Here's what the president had to say before they shooed out the media and started their discussions behind closed doors:

Well, I thought I'd ask you folks to come say hello, and we'll discuss health care. We have really no choice but to solve this situation. Obamacare is a total disaster.

It's melting down as we speak. Rates are going up. In fact, it's very interesting, Lisa, that you're sitting next to me because, in Alaska, it was 206 percent – a 206 percent increase in Alaska. And I used to use Arizona as the standard; that was 116 percent. So it's really meltdown, and we're going to try and solve the problem.

So I invited all of you, and I think we have either 52 out of 52, or 50 out of 52. And John, either one is pretty good, I think, as a percentage.

So we're going to talk and we're going to see what we can do.

We're getting very close. But for the country, we have to have health care. And it can't be Obamacare, which is melting down. The other side is saying all sorts of things before they even knew what the bill was. This will be great if we get it done. And if we don't get it done, it's just going to be something that we're not going to like. And that's OK, and I understand that very well.

But I think we have a chance to do something very, very important for the public—very, very important for the people of our country that we love.

So I'll ask the press to leave. I greatly appreciate you folks being here. We love you very much. You're very kind and very understanding. But we will now ask you to leave. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

One senator who got some one-one-one time in the Oval Office was Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., who said despite their differences during the 2016 presidential campaign, he has grown to respect and like the president. He told a radio host from Iowa's WHO-AM, Simon Conway, that he met with the president for about an hour Tuesday afternoon, and from those discussions, he believed the president wants the bill to look more like a "repeal bill" than it does.

"We've already voted to repeal it 60 times," he said.

Paul also pointed to amendments that are circulating in the Senate already, authored by Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, and Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, that he said do much of what he is hoping to accomplish. But, he also noted that he's not taking an all-or-nothing approach to the bill.

"I will vote 'Yes,' even if it's not a perfect bill," he said. "But, not like it is now. It really needs to look a lot more like a repeal bill." {eo}