

Round 1 to the GOP, Round 2 to the Democrats

The opening round in what is sure to be a three-day boxing match over the Senate's debate on health care went to Republicans, thanks to Vice President Mike Pence's tiebreaking vote.

Round 1 was the vote to begin debate, which prevailed on a 51-50 vote after Sens. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, and Susan Collins, R-Maine—who is now dealing with her own “hot mic” problem—broke ranks and voted with Democrats to retain the Affordable Care Act. Later, during debate, Sen. Bob Graham, D-Fla., announced Collins was working with him on an alternative bill.

Both are former insurance commissioners in their respective states, which he said makes them ideally suited to decide what insurance Americans should be forced to carry.

Round 2 was a victory for Democrats and the Affordable Care Act and proved the boxing match is more of a “battle royale” than “mano a mano.” With nine Republicans breaking ranks—all for various reasons—an amendment that would have defunded Planned Parenthood, expanded the use of health savings accounts, added Sen. Ted Cruz's “consumer choice” provisions and repealed all of Obamacare's taxes and mandates failed on a 57-43 vote.

[Click here](#) to see how your senators voted. [Click here](#) to see the marathon 10-plus-hour session that included a reading of most of the bill senators voted on.

The goal for Senate Republicans at this time is to “get to 50,” meaning they want to pass a bill, which will allow them to enter conference committee with the House of Representatives to hammer out a final bill. GOP leaders are

confident they can get there yet this week. The battle is expected to continue through late Thursday night, possibly early Friday morning.

"We're going to be doing a lot of voting," Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn, R-Texas, told reporters late Tuesday night. "So I hope you eat your Cheerios."

The debate is scheduled to resume at 9:30 a.m. EDT. {eoa}