White House Signals Support for Two New Health-Care Bills

President Donald Trump doesn’t consider the American Health Care Act the end of his fight to tear out Obamacare, that much was made clear Tuesday when the White House signaled its support for two new pieces of health care legislation.

In separate statements, the White House indicated that in their present forms, the president would be inclined to sign into law H.R. 372, the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act of 2017 and H.R. 1101, the Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2017. Both bills have been recently introduced in the House of Representatives.

H.R. 372 was authored by Rep. Paul Gosar (R-Ariz.) and has 20 co-sponsors. The bill was passed out of the House Judiciary Committee nearly a month ago. At that time, Gosar made the following statement:

> Popular cost-reducing reform priorities—such as selling insurance across state lines and developing diverse consumer-driven plans—are predicated on the robust competitive markets this bill will ensure. As a healthcare provider for more than 25 years, I understand firsthand the importance of a competitive and dynamic health insurance market. Patients, doctors and hospitals alike benefit when health insurers compete to provide a variety quality coverage options. I look forward to continue working with House leaders to ensure this bill is part of patient-centered, free market health care reforms.

The White House statement on the bill reads:

> The administration supports H.R. 372, the Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act of 2017. Many Americans have seen their health insurance premiums increase and health care options

> decrease significantly under the Affordable Care Act. The administration supports efforts to restore competition to the health insurance marketplace in order to lower costs and expand choices for consumers.
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> H.R. 372 would amend the McCarran-Ferguson Act to ensure that federal antitrust laws apply to the business of health insurance. The bill supports the goal of giving American families and businesses more control over their own health care choices by promoting greater health insurance competition. The bill would specifically prohibit businesses from engaging in anti-competitive practices, including price-fixing, bid-rigging and market allocation that could drive up health care costs.
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> If H.R. 372 were presented to the president in its current form, his advisers would recommend that he sign the bill into law.

H.R. 1101 was authored by Rep. Sam Johnson (R-Texas) and has 37 co-sponsors. The bill was passed out of the Education & Workforce Committee earlier this month. At that time, Johnson made the following statement:

> Due to Obamacare's burdensome and expensive regulations, fewer and fewer American small businesses can afford to offer health-care coverage—which in turn hurts American families. A commonsense way to help empower these small businesses is to allow them to join together when shopping for health care plans. This will allow them to have the same strength in numbers as large businesses and labor organizations. And the benefits will be real for hardworking American families. With this bill's Committee passage, we are one step closer toward fixing our broken health care system, which continues to remain one of my top priorities.

The White House statement on the bill reads:

> The administration supports H.R. 1101, the Small Business

> Health Fairness Act of 2017. The administration is committed to providing American workers with new options for access to quality, affordable care. The bill would strengthen access to health coverage for workers in the nation's small businesses, many of which struggle to provide their employees with healthcare benefits due to dramatic increases in premiums and healthcare costs under the Affordable Care Act.
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> H.R. 1101 would enable small businesses to provide health benefits to their workers through trade and professional associations, potentially benefiting millions of American families. Forming Association Health Plans (AHPs) would help to closer align options for small businesses with those available to large businesses and labor unions, which are able to offer their employees and members common health benefits across state lines. Small businesses also would benefit from larger risk pools, increased negotiating power and administrative efficiencies, decreasing costs for their workers. AHPs are an important step toward reducing costs and expanding opportunities for quality healthcare.
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> If H.R. 1101 were presented to the president in its current form, his advisers would recommend that he sign the bill into law.

Both bills have been identified as part of the "step-by-step process" the White House and House GOP leadership has said it will implement to fully repeal and replace Obamacare while sidestepping the landmine that exists with the Senate Democrats' filibuster threats. {eoa}