

Why Does Mitch McConnell Refuse to Work With Conservatives?

Republicans have campaigned for years on repealing and replacing ObamaCare, arguing the Affordable Care Act is “failing” and in a “death spiral,” insisting that the law is not fixable.

Indeed, last year they sent a repeal and replace bill to Obama’s desk, which he, of course, vetoed.

However, now that Republicans control the executive and legislative branches of government and should be able to pass or amend any law with little difficulty, they have placed themselves in a bizarre situation in which they are negotiating with themselves over how to save the law they promised to repeal.

This shouldn’t be that hard if the Republican leadership of the House and Senate were committed to governing America according to conservative principles, but the only principles Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Speaker of the House Paul Ryan adhere to are their own power.

Thus, rather than engage in a regular-order committee process through which input from all the Republican members might be obtained and amendments voted up or down, they have engaged in a closed-door process by which they and their nameless and faceless staff control the entire process.

Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kansas)—a “no” vote that took many in Washington by surprise—distanced himself from the closed-door process used to draft the Senate bill.

“It takes two parties who want to come together. Not just

Republicans. Not just Democrats,” he said during a polite, but pointed, meeting with constituents in rural Kansas.

However, principled limited government constitutional conservative Senators Ted Cruz and Mike Lee (Utah) may have found a cure for the GOP’s legislative dysfunction on Obamacare.

Their Consumer Freedom Option could unite the Senate’s fractious GOP majority behind Obamacare repeal and replacement, said Deroy Murdock in a recent column for *National Review*.

“The Consumer Freedom Option simply says that if an insurance company sells in a given state a plan that is consistent with the Title I mandates,” Murdock reports that Cruz told Texas radio host Mark Davis, “that company can also sell any other insurance plan consumers desire.

“What this will allow is, OK, fine. You want to keep your mandates? Knock yourself out with your mandates,” Cruz continued according to Murdock’s reporting. “But, in addition to mandates, let’s let Texans buy the plans they want. Let’s let Texans buy the benefits they want, and let’s let them get lower prices, so that more families who are struggling can actually afford health insurance.”

“We’ve got to do something to reinject free-market forces into this environment,” Lee said Sunday on CBS’s *Face the Nation*. “If we can bring free-market forces to bear, we can bring down costs for middle Americans.”

Conservatives generally applauded the idea of presenting consumers with a private option.

“After almost a decade of promising to repeal Obamacare, it’s time for Republican senators to put their money where their mouths are and get it done,” said Club for Growth president David McIntosh. “At a bare minimum, Congress should not stand

in the way of allowing Americans who want to opt out of Obamacare to do so. And that's why it's so important that the new Senate Obamacare-repeal bill include the Lee-Cruz Consumer Freedom Option, which would allow individuals to opt out of Obamacare's costly regulations."

Unfortunately for American consumers and the political prospects of the Republican Party, the Cruz-Lee Consumer Freedom Option is facing a NIH problem—that's not the National Institutes of Health—it's "Not Invented Here" from McConnell's office.

McConnell on Thursday said during an event in Kentucky that if GOP senators fail to reach an agreement on a bill that can get 50 votes in the chamber, they would have to work with the other party on a way to stabilize the Obamacare insurance markets.

But how would McConnell know whether the Consumer Freedom Option can get 50 votes since it has never been presented to the Senate?

It's pretty clear that the problem in the Senate Republican Conference is Mitch McConnell's unwillingness to actually pursue conservative policy solutions to the health insurance cost and availability crisis brought on by Obamacare's impossible mandates.

We urge you to call Senator McConnell's office to tell him you want a vote on the Consumer Freedom Option. The Capitol Switchboard is 1-866-220-0044. Tell him it's time for Senate Republicans to let the American people know whether they stand with consumers who want choice and freedom or with the Democrats and their abusive and intrusive Obamacare health care mandates. {eo}

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