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Update: Healthcare Reform Facing Major Hurdles

Between Compromises and Protests Can Obama Push His Healthcare Agenda Through?

By **Morgan Phelps**

The US Senate may be close to inking a "compromise" bill on healthcare reform according to [Michael D. Tanner](#) of the Cato Institute. Tanner - a senior fellow at the Cato Institute - says this "compromise" bill keeps what he calls "the worst elements" of the current bill. He says the new bill will still mandate that Americans will have to buy health insurance that meets government standards - even if those standards will cost consumers more, and contains provisions that consumers have no desire to purchase. It still mandates expensive regulations, and Tanner says that it will still contain provisions that will allow government to mandate care provided by doctors.

Tanner says the bill contains two new compromises that are really the same things with just different names.

First, Tanner says that instead of a national public option the bill introduces what it calls a "co-op" option. Of course, Tanner says that the name is a misnomer. He says instead of being run by its members - who would elect the officers - the officers would be appointed by the president, which according to Tanner would make it a de facto public plan. "A 'co-op' run by the federal government, under rules imposed by the federal government and with federal funding is simply government-run health insurance by another name", says Tanner. In fact Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid put it, "We're going to have some type of public option, call it 'co-op,' call it what you want", according to Tanner.

The second "compromise" in the bill is just another misnomer according to Tanner. He says that the new bill will drop a requirement for employers to provide healthcare, but Tanner says the new language requires employers to pay for subsidies spent by the government to cover their uninsured employees if they don't provide insurance for them.

In recent days the administration's efforts to reform health care have met with a backlash from the public. An August 3, 2009 [Rasmussen poll](#) found that 47% of Americans support healthcare reform while 49% oppose the plan. It should be noted that according to the survey those who oppose the plan show more passion: just 25% of supporters support it strongly while those who strongly oppose the plan rank at 41% of those surveyed. There's a three percent (+/-) margin of error in the poll.

[Fox News](#) says that Democrats are being dismissive of opponents of reform appearing at their town hall meetings are exercising "mob rule". "The Republicans and their allied groups desperate after losing two consecutive elections and every major policy fight on Capitol Hill ... are inciting angry mobs of a small number of rabid right wing extremists funded by K Street Lobbyists to disrupt thoughtful discussions about the future of health care in America taking place in Congressional Districts across the country," DNC spokesman Brad Woodhouse said in a statement according to Fox. Beirbart.tv posted a [video](#) of White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs saying that any anger expressed by citizens is "manufactured".

The White House is also fighting back against a charge leveled by the Drudge Report that the president is seeking to institute a single payer system. In a [video link](#) from the Drudge site to a youtube.com video of the president speaking to an AFL-CIO group, President Obama (in 2003) clearly says that he is a "proponent of a single payer system". In response the White House posted a [three minute video](#) rebuttal according to politico.com.

Sources

1. [Michael D. Tanner](#) of the Cato Institute.
2. [Rasmussen poll](#)
3. [video](#) of White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs
4. [Fox News](#)
5. [video link](#) to youtube.com
6. [three minute video](#) on politico.com

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Takeaways

Michael D. Tanner of Cato Institute says pending healthcare compromise in Senate is same as old bill

Meanwhile the White House is fighting to keep reform alive in face of massive protests.

White House and critics engage in open warfare over accusations of dishonesty from each party