



Obama Calls For More Government in Obamacare

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It seems that Obamacare is not enough for the law's namesake. In a lengthy journal article published Monday, President Obama called on Congress to revisit the policy of allowing Americans to buy government-run insurance plans, an idea that was scrapped during original consideration of the Affordable Care Act.

"The public plan did not make it into the final legislation," Obama stated in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. "Now, based on experience with the ACA, I think Congress should revisit a public plan to compete alongside private insurers in areas of the country where competition is limited."

Although Obama believes that "the Marketplaces are working," UnitedHealthcare and Blue Cross Blue Shield are already thinking about pulling out of several states. Fourteen cooperatives have shuttered, while another one has sued the government. Finally, the Associated Press reported last month that insurance premiums were expected to increase overall under his healthcare law.

"Adding a public plan in such areas would strengthen the Marketplace approach, giving consumers more affordable options while also creating savings for the federal government," the president said.

This looks like 2008 all over again. When Obama ran for his first presidential term, he supported a public option, but more moderate Democratic senators objected to that policy in 2009. And now, Hillary Clinton, the Democratic nominee for president in 2016, is backing the public option during her election bid.

People on both sides of the healthcare debate believe that the public option is a bad idea. Michael Cannon of the libertarian Cato Institute wrote in 2009 that it would chase cheaper plans out of the market. Marcia Angell of Harvard Medical School—who supports universal, single-payer health care—predicted during debate of Obamacare that a public option would potentially just be a waste of time: "a dumping ground for the sickest."

In any case, with Republicans controlling Congress, Obama's idea would never pass in the first place. Even his aides acknowledge that this is coming from a lame-duck presidency, telling *The Hill* "that Obama will not be pressuring Congress to pass these changes...and is instead laying out ideas for future policymakers."