



Health Reform Looms as These Big Elections Next Month Could Change Congress for a Decade

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WASHINGTON - We hear a lot about the 2020 presidential race, but next month 538 state legislative seats are up for grabs in multiple states, and the winners of those races, along with more to come next year, will shape the makeup of Congress for the next decade.

Voters in Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey and Virginia cast their votes November 5th.

While President Obama was in the White House, Democrats lost nearly 1,000 state legislative seats. Now Democrats are laser focused on getting them back and they're punching Republicans on health care.

In campaign attack ads, Democrats are accusing Republicans of not supporting protections for people with pre-existing conditions.

Even though President Trump and Congressional Republicans have said repeatedly that they support protections, there's been no action, and Democrats smell blood.

"Republicans just don't do healthcare. This has never been one of their strong suits and it's a real and decades long problem. It's one of the reasons we got the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare is because Republicans have paid insufficient attention to this issue," Michael Cannon tells CBN News. He's director of health policy studies at Cato Institute.

Tuesday a group of House Republicans working closely with the White House released a proposal they say gives Americans freedom of choice, a clear alternative to socialist policies popular on the left.

"Parts of that proposal are really strong. They would take the \$828 billion of workers' earnings that employers get to control because of a weird quirk of the tax code - they would give that \$828 billion to the workers who earned it - that's a huge change and then the workers could buy their own health insurance. It stays with them as they move from job to job rather than having their employer choose a plan for them that disappears when they move to another job," Cannon explains.

Also in the plan, at the president's urging, protections for pre-existing conditions.

"We want to protect pre-existing conditions by treating those who are self-employed the same way we treat those with insurance who get it through their job," says Rep. Roger Marshall (R-KS) one of the architects of the plan.

How the healthcare debate turns out could have a lot to do with those state legislative races because after the 2020 census those lawmakers will draw congressional lines that will stand through 2030. That could change the number of Democrat- or Republican-leaning districts for a decade, directly affecting who's in control of Congress.