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I don't think the GOP Obamacare replacement process 'really is chaos'

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House Speaker Paul Ryan on Wednesday night defended the House Republican leadership's efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, the healthcare law better known as Obamacare.

During an interview on Fox News, host Tucker Carlson said the introduction of the GOP plan, called the American Health Care Act, "looks like chaos." Ryan took exception to the characterization.

"Well, actually, I don't think it really is chaos," Ryan said. "I heard what you said, but here's what we did a year ago. A year ago, House Republicans said, 'We need to take a plan to repeal and replace Obamacare to the country.' We spent a year working on this plan."

Republicans introduced the AHCA late Monday and brought the bill to House committees on Wednesday. The Ways and Means Committee approved the bill Thursday morning, and it is still being debated in the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Those moves, however, have come before the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has had the chance to score the bill to estimate its effects on the federal deficit and on Americans' health coverage. Additionally, numerous conservative Republicans have spoken out against the bill, saying it does not go far enough in its repeal of Obamacare. And moderate Republicans in the Senate have attacked the bill for changing federal funding to Medicaid. That has put the future of the AHCA in question.

Besides lawmakers, multiple conservative-leaning groups like Heritage Action, the Cato Institute, and the Club for Growth have attacked the AHCA. Medical groups including the American Medical Association have also expressed opposition to the plan.

Even the insurance lobbying group America's Health Insurance Plans — which represents major insurers including Anthem, Cigna, and Humana — has recommended changes to the law.

Ryan said most of these groups were against the bill because they didn't understand the technical proceedings of the replacement process. Since Democrats could block a bill that changes statutory parts of Obamacare using a filibuster, the GOP is using a narrow process called budget reconciliation that requires only a simple majority in the Senate.

"There's three phases here, and that's what a lot of outside groups and folks just don't understand the fact that if we put everything in the bill we possibly want, we would have a filibuster, we wouldn't be able to pass it in the Senate," Ryan said. "So this bill, which is the first phase of a three-phase plan, is what we can pass without a filibuster in a budget bill."

Ryan went on to say that some members of Congress and interest groups didn't understand the process and that the House GOP leadership was working to avoid confusion.

"And it's that confusion that I think is running this issue," Ryan said. "But the point here is we're keeping our promises — we're excited about this."

In explaining the disagreements between GOP members over the bill, Ryan said it was a natural process of taking control of the presidency and both chambers of Congress.

"So, we are going through what I would call the sort of typical growing pains from being an opposition party fighting Barack Obama and Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid to a governing party," Ryan said.