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Historic PelosiCare Debate Starts Right Now

by Brian Darling

Today, a historic debate will commence on a bill that would impose big government health care on all Americans. Nobody knows if this bill is going to pass and many questions about the bill remain unanswered. All those who cherish the idea of limited government and a health care system driven by free market principles are hoping that good prevails over evil.

Yesterday, the House Rules Committee passed the rule to consider H.R. 3962 (PelosiCare), the Affordable Health Care for America Act, and this debate will be covered live on C-SPAN all day long. Today, the American people can watch the debate in the House of Representatives on legislation that would dramatically change the way health care services are delivered.



Who is the Next Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky?

The vote on final passage of the bill is going to be close and people looking to the 2010 congressional election cycle are going to watch this vote to see which Blue Dog Democrats, Democrats from conservative leaning districts, are going to be forced to Walk the Plank and vote for an unpopular bill. Dan Perrin of Red State has an excellent review of what happed to one term former Congresswoman Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky of Pennsylvania. Perrin wrote "we are reminded of the case of Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky (D-PA) who famously switched her vote to give then President Clinton his tax increase." She lost her re-election the next year and became the poster child for the 1994 Republican sweep of Congress.

It is possible that a handful of Congressman from a conservative leaning district are considered the deciding votes to pass PelosiCare and that may cause them problems going into an election cycle that, if the Governor's elections in NJ and VA are any indication, may be an uphill climb for many Democrats.

Mandates

The PelosiCare bill is very long and complicated. Congressional Quarterly (subscription required) reports that the bill's coverage requirements include an individuals mandate requiring "nearly all individuals to obtain health care coverage, beginning in 2013." Also, an employer mandate requiring "employers to offer their employees health care insurance, or make an insurance contribution on their behalf, starting in 2013." A federal heath insurance exchange will be created and being operation in 2013 "that would allow individuals and small businesses to purchase health insurance from insurers participating in the exchange." Many conservatives, and libertarians like Michael Cannon at CATO, object to the mandates, because they feel that mandating health insurance is a means to a government takeover of health care.

Public Option

The controversial public option is part of PelosiCare and "requires the establishment of a public health insurance option within the insurance exchange by 2013." The federal government would "run the public option and negotiate with providers to determine rates." The Heritage Foundation argues that the problems with a public option are that the "costs are hidden," public provided health care offers "substandard care compared to private health insurance," the government be unfairly setting up rules for competition between the government and private health insurance providers, and that "as many as 119 million Americans would no longer be in private coverage."

The end goal of the public option for the left is a "the end goal is definitely a single-payer system. That's why many supporters of a single-payer system, where the government runs the whole health system, are suddenly converts to choice and private competition as long as there is a public plan." Don't believe me and The Heritage Foundation? Just listen to Rep Jan Schakowsky (D-II). Also, PelosiCare prevents insurance companies from denying or lowering coverage because of an individuals pre-existing condition starting in 2013.

Taxes

Taxes would be raised under PelosiCare. The bill imposes a 5.4 percent tax surcharge on individuals earning \$500,000 or \$1 million for married couples. This is scored by the Congressional Budget Office as a \$461 billion in revenues to pay for the bill. There is a controversial 2.5% surcharge on medical devices that will be passed on to you, the consumer. Health Savings Accounts HSAs are under attack with discriminatory tax provisions intended on legislating HSAs out of existence. Ryan Ellis of Americans for Tax Reform has compiled a comprehensive list of all the tax increases in PelosiCare.

Cost

The Heritage Foundation estimates the cost of this bill, over the next 10 years, to be \$1.5 trillion. The President promised that ObamaCare would not cost the American people more than \$900 billion, yet the bill being considered in the House breaks yet another Obama promise. If you take the CBO price tag and add the so called Doc Fix bill, which changes the way doctors are reimbursed for Medicate payments and has been part of the Obamacare debate from the start, that adds another \$245 billion over the next 10 years.

Donald Marron, former CBO director, estimated that there are \$217 billion in additional spending ignored by CBO. Even if the bill cost under the arbitrary \$900 billion limit requested by the President, that seems to be a \$900 billion expansion of the federal government that we, as a nation, don't need right now.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) scored this bill as a net savings of \$129 billion over the next 10 years. Only in Washington, D.C. could a bill that expands government, raises taxes, creates numerous new federal programs and costs over one trillion dollars be considered legislation that saves taxpayer's monies. Even if you accept the CBO's numbers as true, you have some shocking numbers. There are \$427 billion in promised cuts to programs and we are not clear who will be impacted by these massive cuts to programs that many are relying on for health care services. There are \$594 in additional revenues, this means taxes and these monies will be coming out of other productive sectors of the economy.

Abortion

The abortion issue has become the most serious stumbling block for Pelosicare. Congressman Bart Stupak (D-MI), co-chairman of the House Pro-Life caucus has warned leaders that up to 40 democrats might vote against PelosiCare unless if stronger language is not added to the bill to prevent federal funding of insurance plans that cover abortion services. If these Pro-Life Democrats follow through with that threat, the bill will not pass.

Stupak has an Amendment that he wants to offer that would prevent insurance plans from getting federal monies to cover abortions. Supporters of PelosiCare argue that the bill does not require insurance plans to cover abortions, yet the plan would empower the Obama Administration to decide whether the government run public option would cover elective abortions. Is there any question that bureaucrats in the Obama Administration would support government funded abortions?

Congressman Brad Ellsworth (D-IN) has offered an amendment that no federal funding would be allowed for abortion services and all Americans would have access to at least one plan that does not cover abortions. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Right to Life don't think this is enough, but it will be interesting to see how the Democrats in the House Pro-Life Caucus vote on PelosiCare with the Ellsworth language added to the bill. Abortion could be the issue that takes down comprehensive health care reform in the end.

Immigration

The President promised that illegal immigrants would not be covered by the health care reform proposal. Joe Wilson (R-SC) disagreed. The immigration issue seems to be unresolved and an issue that will be hotly debated today.

The bottom line is that this debate will be played out over this important weekend in the fight against big government. Feel free to use this as an open thread during the debate and remember to watch these elite politicians as they attempt to seize control of private health care, raise your taxes and spend over a trillion of your dollars.

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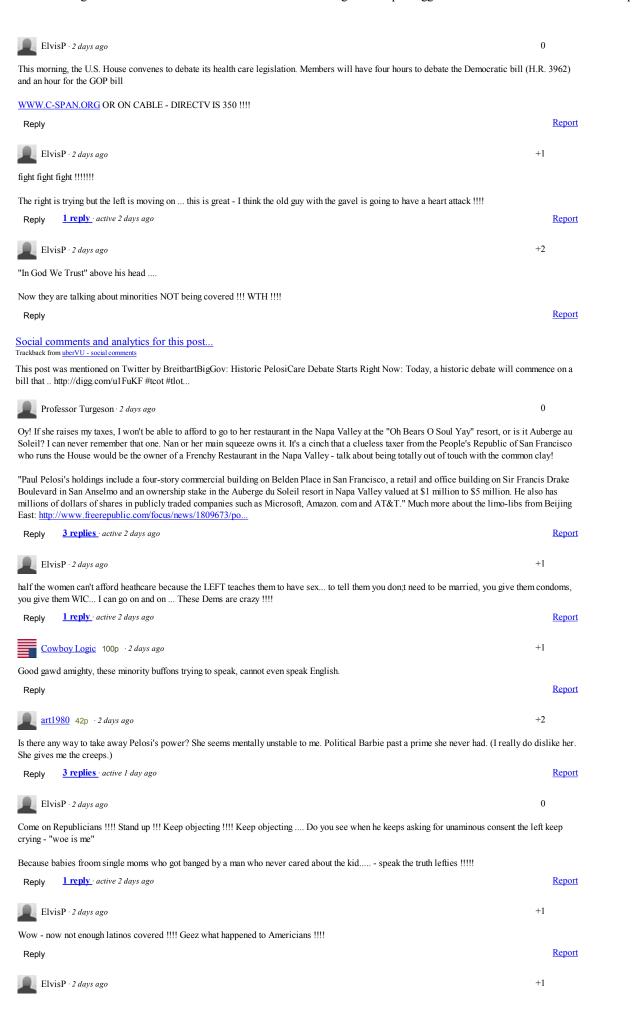
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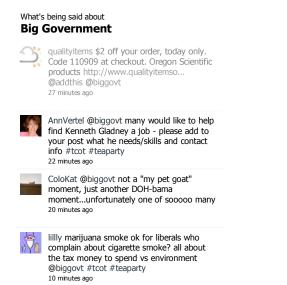
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