

Blog Watch

« [Low Expectations For Public Plan Comeback](#)

Picking Apart Obama's Proposal

Kate Steadman, KHN

FEBRUARY 22ND, 2010

Bloggers were quick to react to President Barack Obama's first [official proposal](#) for a health overhaul bill, presented in advance of Thursday's health care 'summit'. Reactions range from nonplussed to concerns the government would be "fixing prices" to predictions of new political momentum to complete the health overhaul process.

[The New Republic's](#) Jonathan Cohn gives readers an overview of where things stand: "strictly speaking, [Obama isn't] introducing a health care plan at all. He is, instead, proposing a set of changes to the bill that the Senate passed in December. If both chambers pass these changes—and if the House passes the Senate bill—health care reform will become law."

[Wonk Room's](#) Igor Volsky makes a helpful chart summarizing the differences between Obama's proposal and the House and Senate overhaul bills.

[Time's](#) Kate Pickert reports on the legislative steps that would need to take place in order for Democrats to pass a final bill: "Democrats are still miles from the finish line. House Democrats are not eager to pass the Senate bill and Republicans have promised to obstruct a reconciliation bill in the Senate. Asked on a conference call with reporters if the House and Senate leadership have signed off on the Obama plan, White House communications director Dan Pfeiffer said the plan was 'informed by our discussions with House and Senate leadership...but this is the President's proposal.' The thing is, the President can't make laws by himself."

Right leaning bloggers zeroed in on Obama's proposal to limit health insurer rate increases, an idea not present in the House or Senate bills, and due in large part to [recent rate-hike announcements](#) of up to 39% in California.

[Cato's](#) Michael Cannon thinks the rate regulation idea was rejected during President Bill Clinton's reform push: "a key feature of that blueprint will be premium caps, a form of government price control that helped kill the Clinton health plan when even New Democrats rejected it." Cannon continues, echoing the sentiments of many right-leaning commentators today: "This is not hope. This is not change. (Much less a game-changer.) It is, to pinch a phrase, a return to [the failed theories that helped lead us into this crisis](#)."

[The Daily Caller's](#) Jon Ward interviews a Republican Senate leadership aide who reacts to the health insurer rate regulation portions, saying, "Wow, this is the biggest news of the week: even the White House is now admitting that their massive health spending bill won't do anything about rising premiums."

[The American Spectator's](#) Philip Klein says Obama is taking a "sledgehammer" to one of his promises to consumers that they could keep their current insurance, if they like it. "The Senate bill has a measure to protect so-called 'grandfathered plans,' which would allow policy holders to maintain coverage in plans that may not abide by all of the requirements imposed on new individual plans offered on the government-run exchanges," Klein writes. "But Obama's new proposal changes all of that" by adding certain "consumer protections" to those plans. "the provision to allow people to keep their 'grandfathered plans' is rendered meaningless when the federal government is dictating what is in them."

[Critical Condition's](#) Tevi Troy also reacts to the insurer rate increase regulation, saying, "While I am no fan of high premiums, and I believe that Anthem did itself and the opponents of the Democratic bills no favors by its recent proposed rate hikes, flat out forbidding rate hikes will not solve the underlying problems we face."

[Insure Blog's](#) Henry Stern takes stock of the items and concludes: "If there's any 'good news,' it's that the so-called 'Public Option' ([the not-so-stealthy means to gummint-run health care](#)) is nowhere to be seen."

However, some bloggers viewed the proposal as a potential step forward. The Washington Post's [Ezra Klein](#) thinks the proposal could be a game-changer, politically: "But if the changes to the underlying policies are modest, the impact on the politics will be tremendous. ... The release of this plan marks the end of the Scott Brown election and the resumption of the health-care process."

Tags: [bill](#), [obama](#), [summit](#)

This entry was posted on Monday, February 22nd, 2010 at 3:55 pm and is filed under [Blog Watch](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. Both comments and pings are currently closed.

Comments are closed.

CONTACT US

[Comments? Contact Us](#)

FACEBOOK

[Vist KHN On Facebook](#)

RSS

[Subscribe to our RSS Feed](#)

TWITTER

[Follow KHN on Twitter](#)