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[Michael Bennet's lame support for "public option" via reconciliation](#)

February 18th, 2010 | by Brian Schwartz |

The *Denver Post* [reports](#):

U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet is pressing colleagues to use a procedural tool known as reconciliation to pass health-reform legislation — and to include the controversial public-insurance option in the bill. ...

“Much of the public identifies a public option as the key component of health care reform — and as the best thing we can do to stand up for regular people against big insurance companies,” said the letter, which so far has garnered signatures from six other Senate Democrats.

This is a terrible argument. Insurance companies are big because [government shields insurers from competition](#). For example, a tax policy that ties use to our employers' plans and the ban on buying more affordable plans available in other states. If Bennet wants to create an option, he and his left-wing authoritarian pals should start their own insurance company instead of one backed by the guns of government that would [compete unfairly](#) with existing ones.

As for reconciliation, Michael Tanner of Cato [explains](#) it this way:

The last, desperate gasp would be to use an arcane procedure known as reconciliation to pass health care reform with just 51 votes. But doing so would require Senate Democrats to overcome all manner of procedural hurdles. Reconciliation cannot be used for policy as opposed to budgetary issues. That means Democrats would have to drop some of their more popular proposals like the ban on preexisting conditions. They would be left with a bill that did little more than expand [Medicaid](#) and other subsidies, raise taxes, and cut [Medicare](#). How popular would that be?

But maybe there's a way to finagle the rules to pass more through the reconciliation process. For more details on this, see Keith Hennessey's two in-depth posts on this issue:

- [What is reconciliation?](#)
- [How reconciliation might be used for health care reform](#)

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