



## The Rundown

A BLOG OF NEWS AND INSIGHT

HEADLINES -- March 17, 2010

### Wednesday: Lawmakers Debate 'Deem and Pass'; al-Maliki Wants Recount

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*Jim Griffin of Fort Washington, Md., dresses as Captain America at a Tea Party rally against the health care reform bill Tuesday in Washington. (Photo by Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images.)*

It's Saint Patrick's Day, and President Barack Obama is marking the holiday with a **meeting with Ireland's prime minister**, a lunch with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and then an interview about **health care reform** with Fox News.

The president, along with House Democrats, is fighting to defend **the procedural tactics** being weighed to pass a comprehensive health care reform bill as early as Friday.

Under the so-called "**deem and pass**" maneuver under consideration, House Democrats would vote to approve a series of **changes to the Senate's health care bill**. By approving changes to the Senate bill, the House vote would have the effect of deeming the upper chamber's bill passed without actually having to vote on the measure.

Republicans have responded by blasting Democrats for abusing the legislative process and warned the move would be used against them **in the coming midterm elections**. Democrats counter that deem and pass is actually a maneuver the GOP **should actually be familiar with**.

**The Cato Institute's Michael F. Cannon** calls the tactic "a scheme" and wonders, "are we under any obligation to obey it? The answer may be no."

"Yes, a health care bill passed the Senate with 60 votes, and a health care bill passed the House with 220 votes. But they're two different bills, and the same exact bill has to pass both chambers to be signed into law," **says the American Spectator**.

**Slate's John Dickerson** says House Democrats are not considering deem and pass out of cowardice. Rather, "part of what is requiring them to be so creative is the unpredictability of the coming reconciliation process in the Senate."

"The most troubling aspect of 'deemed to have passed' ... is that it gives the Republicans something else to talk about aside from the bill itself and the

issues it is designed to address," **says John Conason in Salon.**

**Despite claims to the contrary,** the Atlantic's **Mark Ambinder** calls the tactic "constitutionally and legislatively valid." Still, "Democrats seem to have completely bungled the very legit procedure they hope to use to give wavering moderates some cover. Quite simply, no one seems to have explained the rule to them in a way that they can understand and explain."

#### **Al-Maliki Alleges Vote Manipulation, Wants Recount**

Iraq's Prime Minister **Nouri al-Maliki has called for a recount** of votes registered in Baghdad during parliamentary elections March 7. The prime minister **has alleged vote manipulation** after watching his lead over his main rival, former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, dwindle.

#### **5 Virginia Men Charged in Pakistan**

Five men from the Northern Virginia area arrested in Pakistan in December could face life in prison **after being charged Wednesday** for allegedly using the country as a base for plotting terror attacks. **The men,** who range in age from 18 to 24, have denied the charges and claimed they were being tortured in jail.

#### **Senate Expected to Pass Jobs Bill**

The Senate on Wednesday is expected to clear **a \$17.6 billion jobs bill** offering tax cuts to businesses that hire new workers. But even with the extra aid, **three top White House economic officials said** Tuesday they did not expect employers to hire enough workers this year to bring the jobless rate much lower than its current level of 9.7 percent.

#### **Holder: Bin Laden Would Never Stand Trial**

Attorney General Eric Holder told House lawmakers Tuesday that Osama bin Laden, if found, **would never stand trial in a U.S. court** because he would not be taken alive. "The reality is that we will be reading Miranda rights to the corpse of Osama bin Laden," Holder said. "He will be killed by us, or he will be killed by his own people so he's not captured by us."

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