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## Bocchieri was right to have his doubts

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Stark County's representative in Congress joined an exclusive club Saturday — the group of freshman members of Congress who have bucked their party's leaders on an important bill.

Rep. John Bocchieri, who was elected a year ago to represent the 16th District, was one of 13 brand-new Democratic legislators to vote against the mammoth House bill that overhauls the country's health care system. Bocchieri was right to have his doubts. He thought for himself and acted in the best interests of his district, not the Democratic Party.

Bocchieri was among the House members who raised legitimate concerns about the cost of the bill and about inadequate provisions to stop waste and fraud in the Medicare program.

Bocchieri and the 38 other Democrats who voted "no" didn't keep the bill from passing. But their rebellion will make a difference down the line with moderate Democrats in the Senate, which is far from having its own bill to vote on. And that force for moderation could make a real difference for health care consumers, employers and taxpayers.

As the libertarian Cato Institute advocates, a more market-based approach to health care could lower and control costs. Its proposals:

n "Give Medicare enrollees a voucher and the freedom to choose any health plan on the market. Vouchers would be means-tested, would contain Medicare spending, and are the only way to protect seniors from government rationing."

n "Give workers control over their health care dollars ... with large health savings accounts."

n "Break up state monopolies on insurance ... allowing consumers to purchase health insurance licensed by other states."

n "Reform Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program the way (Congress) reformed welfare in 1996. ... Block-granting these programs would reduce the deficit and encourage states to target resources to the truly needy."

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