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Baucus bill passes committee but there is no agreement

October 13, 8:05 PM • Sebastian County Libertarian Examiner • Brian Leach

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With one Republican vote, and 13 votes from Democrats, the Senate Finance Committee approved a health care overhaul the CBO says will cost \$829 billion. However, the CBO said that the true cost of the program could not be pinpointed, and opposition is expected from Democrats and Republicans when the bill hits the Senate floor.



Sen. Max Baucus of Montana. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

The bill, which doesn't include a 'public option' per se, must now be merged with the one passed by the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, which includes a public option, in July before any vocal opposition from the public was heard. These meetings should begin very soon where the two committees will hammer together a conglomeration of the two immensely complicated bills. Who knows what the outcome will be when the unified healthcare bill goes before the Senate before the end of October.

In its current state, the Baucus bill requires all U.S. citizens and legal residents to purchase health insurance just as drivers must purchase insurance before they can legally drive. The government will subsidize the purchase of health insurance, on a sliding scale, for those who can't afford the payments. No one will be denied coverage for any pre-existing conditions.

According to the Cato Institute's Michael F. Cannon, the CBO is way off in its cost estimates. "The Baucus bill will not reduce the deficit, and it would ultimately cost taxpayers more than \$2 trillion – just like every other bill Congress has produced so far," he said.

[Budget trickery](#) was used to describe the savings of \$81 billion over the next 10 years. You see, none of the provisions even take effect until July of 2013. The cost of the bill during the first 10 years it exists is closer to \$1.3 trillion.

Other savings are claimed by from a 21 percent reduction in Medicare payments. Problem is these payments were already scheduled by a previous law. The reductions were supposed to begin in 2003 and have never happened. Does anybody really believe our spend-happy government will restrict these payments now?

The plan calls for taxes that will recoup some of the costs of the plan. It is for this reason that independent Senator Joe Lieberman has joined the majority of House Democrats in opposition of the Baucus bill. The bill calls for a 40% tax on so called "Cadillac plans" that cost more than \$8,000 for individuals or \$21,000 for families. Lieberman expressed concerns that these taxes would be passed on to consumers.

"I'm afraid that in the end the Baucus bill is actually going to raise the price of insurance for most of the people in the country," [said](#) Lieberman on the *Imus in the Morning* show airing on the Fox Business Network. The senator, who nearly always votes with the Democratic Party, said he

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