

# Blog Watch

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## Was The Medicare Payment Fix Undercovered?

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Bloggers are reacting to yesterday's Senate [vote](#) on "fixing" future Medicare payments to docs, along with more commentary on everyone's (apparent) favorite topic to cheer: the public option.

[Bob Laszewski](#) says a vote that rejected increasing Medicare payments to physicians and hospitals in the face of looming cuts "was easy to predict," but notes, "In a town st in the cynical traditions of politics a bunch of Senators and some career federal health care experts both chose to do the right thing during the last 24-hours. If they keep this we just might find our way to real health care reform some day!"

[Heritage's](#) Conn Carroll says that the failed Medicare 'doc fix' vote "marks a significant failure of the Left's special interest approach to passing Obamacare. From the beginn the White House thought that [if it bought off all of the business interests involved](#) (the American Medical Association, the drug industry, health insurers, hospitals, etc.) oppo to the plan would wither."

[Wonk Room's](#) Igor Volsky says Republicans' vote against the bill was "hypocritical" because "[Senate Minority Leader Mitch] McConnell supported paying for the SGR patch payment fix) with deficit spending before he opposed it. Since Congress began fixing the formula in 1999, he — and the majority of the Republican party — rarely objected t barrowing "another cent to pay for it." McConnell has voted to patch the SGR five different times, three of his votes resulted in increased deficits"

On the public option, [Slate's](#) Timothy Noah argues that there are three "likely" reasons that a new [Washington Post/ABC poll](#) was framed as " some miraculous resurgence. Majority support for the public option has been ignored in Washington. ... 2) Political reporters are momentum junkies, forever plotting out momentary trends to infinity. ... 3) insurance lobby goofed."

Meanwhile, The Washington Post's [Ezra Klein](#) discusses three "public option compromises:" There are three 'compromise' public options currently being considered in the Senate (and yes, I know many argue that the public option is itself a compromise, and there's something to that). Ben Nelson is advocating one. Olympia Snowe is behind another. Jay Rockefeller is talking up a third. Herewith, a guide for the perplexed."

And [Cato's](#) Michael Cannon has a new paper on "[Yes, Mr. President, A Free Market Can Fix Health Care](#) (pdf)." He lists options for Congress to incorporate more free-mar principles, including allowing the sale of insurance across state lines and reforming the tax treatment of health insurance. Cannon concludes, "Would a free market be nirva Of course not. But fewer Americans would fall through the cracks than under the status quo or the government takeover advancing through Congress."

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