

# The GOP Congress hopes to vote on Obamacare replacement on Thursday

By **James Williams** - March 17, 2017



## GOP Congress will have a showdown on the replacement plan for Obamacare on Thursday

House Republicans will vote Thursday on Speaker Paul Ryan's Obamacare replacement bill, two senior GOP sources told POLITICO. The move shows that GOP leaders are confident they have the 216 votes needed to pass the bill, even as the far-right and centrist Republicans continue to press for changes.

GOP leaders and President Donald Trump spent much of Friday morning talking to critics of the plan. Trump called a number of lawmakers concerned about the bill to the White House, where Majority Whip Steve Scalise and his chief deputy whip Patrick McHenry also huddled with wary members.

President Trump on Friday declared his “100 percent” commitment to the GOP’s ObamaCare repeal plan, adding that “ObamaCare is dead.”

“I want people to know ObamaCare is dead, it’s a dead healthcare plan,” Trump said in the Oval Office during a meeting with conservative lawmakers.

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According to Roll Call it was President Trump who in a meeting at the White House this morning won support from key members of the conservative Republican Study Committee (RSC) by agreeing to give states the option to impose work requirements on Medicaid recipients and the option to block grant Medicaid instead of the cap system in the bill.

The bill remains far from a slam dunk in the House as the all -important Freedom Caucus still has strong objections to the bill. The group’s chairman, Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), told the press this morning that the work requirements being optional, was not a major change and only moves the ball “a couple of yards” down a very large field.

There remains a great deal of work left to get the replacement bill the 216 votes it needs to pass in the House next Thursday. Even if the bill were to get the votes to pass the Senate remains a much more difficult hurdle.

“People say it’s like herding cats. It’s not herding cats. It’s herding ravenous tigers,” said Rep. Barry Loudermilk (R-Ga.), a conservative who has yet to give his support to the House bill.

“There’s a lot on the line here — not only for Paul Ryan as speaker, but for us as a conference, for us as a party and obviously for the president,” said Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.)

“The president’s much better off with a strong speaker than a damaged speaker — and vice versa — the speaker’s better off with a strong president.”

But with opposition rising from both moderate Republicans and the hard-right House Freedom Caucus, Ryan's best hope now seems to be amending his widely panned bill in order to ensure at a minimum that it passes the House.

But for the moment there is a full court press in the House to get the 216 votes needed to pass the replacement bill. They will worry in the Senate when it gets there.

### **James Williams**

Jim Williams is the Washington Bureau Chief, Digital Director as well as the Director of Special Projects for Genesis Communications. He is starting his third year as part of the team. This is Williams 40th year in the media business, and in that time he has served in a number of capacities. He is a seven time Emmy Award winning television producer, director, writer and executive. He has developed four regional sports networks, directed over 2,000 live sporting events including basketball, football, baseball hockey, soccer and even polo to name a few sports. Major events include three Olympic Games, two World Cups, two World Series, six NBA Playoffs, four Stanley Cup Playoffs, four NCAA Men's National Basketball Championship Tournaments (March Madness), two Super Bowl and over a dozen college bowl games. On the entertainment side Williams was involved with Berman Concerts and directed over 500 concerts for Showtime, Pay Per View and MTV Networks.

