

President Trump willing to listen to improvements on the new Obamacare replacement bill

By **James Williams** - March 8, 2017



President Trump knows there is a better plan coming after the dust settles

President Donald Trump is not yet ready to commit that the Republican leadership's first effort at their version of the Affordable Care Act replacement plan. Yes, he is supportive of the law but knows that it has as many critics in the GOP as it does supporters at this point in time.

Yesterday, Human Services Sec. Tom Price, a former Georgia congressman who has long

sought to upend Obamacare, kicked off the White House press briefing by calling the bill “a work in progress,” indicating that the administration was open to edits from Capitol Hill.

Press Secretary Sean Spicer passed on a chance to call the plan Trump’s, saying, “We’re not jamming it down anyone’s throats.”



And Vice President Mike Pence, who met on Tuesday with Republican senators, told reporters that Trump “supports” the bill, describing it as a “framework for reform.” The White House will be the final hurdle for Republicans, who have spent years agitating to undo Obamacare.

“We’re going to have insurance for everybody,” President Trump told the Washington Post in January, promising the new product would arrive “in a much simplified form. Much less expensive and much better.”

Photo: AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta

At the moment it is up to Congress to help President Trump keep his promise to voters and so far, it is early in the process. So, as you can imagine there is plenty of people within the Republican party making their voices heard.

The most vocal opposition to date has come from the tea party and its descendants in the House. Many of them campaigned on promises of “full repeal.” But the bill on the table right now is closer to a restructuring, then eliminating Obamacare.

Though it would scrap the current mandate, the new proposal includes an inducement to stay insured, in the form of a 30% surcharge on a year’s premium, for anyone who allows their coverage to lapse or drops it, then seeks to re-enter the market. Conservatives also view the prospect of a refundable tax credit to help pay for insurance as another “entitlement,” or government spending program.

There is plenty of money from Republican groups outside Washington, D.C. that are interested tanking the law before it even gets out of committee.

Many of the groups, think tanks and donors that helped bolster the GOP congressional majority are now openly at odds with the leadership.

FreedomWorks, a conservative group that provided early support to the tea party, has called the bill’s “surcharge” on people who let their coverage lapse a “Republican Individual

Mandate.”

They announced on Tuesday evening plans to spend “well into six figures” on a “digital and social media ad campaign to mobilize conservatives in key districts and nationwide to contact their legislators and tell them to oppose ObamaCare Lite.”

The Koch Brothers-backed Americans for Prosperity tweeted a message for Speaker Paul Ryan: “Our advice: Take it back to the drawing board.”

Another key player the Heritage Foundation tweeted that “the House Republican health care bill falls short of the Obamacare repeal that Republicans have long promised.”

And in a statement, Heritage Action CEO Michael Needham argued that the plan is so similar to Obamacare that it effectively enshrines its principles.

“In many ways, the House Republican proposal released last night not only accepts the flawed progressive premises of Obamacare but expands upon them,” Needham said, then joining the chorus asking to divide the replacement process from the repeal.

“Rather than accept the flawed premises of Obamacare,” he continued, “congressional Republicans should fully repeal the failed law and begin a genuine effort to deliver on longstanding campaign promises that create a free market health care system that empowers patients and doctors.”

So, look for President Trump to be careful not make the same mistake President Barack Obama and the Democrats

Quotes in this story came from CNN and ASSOCIATED PRESS – Video is from CNN

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Jim Williams is the Washington Bureau Chief, Digital Director as well as the Director of Special Projects for

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