

Isakson Statement on Passage of Health Care Reform Legislation

WASHINGTON - U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., today voted against final passage of the Democrats' terribly flawed health care bill, because he believes it will raise taxes, raise premiums, cut benefits for seniors and place a massive unfunded mandate on the states.

The Senate approved the health care reform legislation by a vote of 60 to 39.

The Senate bill now must be reconciled with a different version passed by the House. If the two chambers are able to reach a compromise on a final health care reform bill, each chamber still must vote to approve that compromise.

Isakson said, "This process is not over by a long shot, and I will continue to fight against it every single day.

"Ramming through a bill drafted behind closed doors and stuffed with special deals to secure the votes of certain senators was the wrong way to go about this debate. The health care of the American people is too important for the Senate to exploit it so politically in this manner. This has not been a thoughtful process, and it is an unfortunate way to do business.

"At a time when Georgia and most states are already under tremendous budgetary stress due to the economy, the proposed expansion of Medicaid contained in this bill is a recipe for disaster. It's not fair to say we're covering more people if we are bankrupting our states through this massive unfunded mandate.

"The unintended consequences of this legislation are disastrous. This bill will only drive up the cost of health care and put a government bureaucrat between a patient and his doctor. This bill is bad for Georgia, bad for families, bad for our seniors and bad for the American economy."

Chambliss: This Bill is a Political Victory, Not a Substantive One

WASHINGTON - U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., today made the following statement regarding the Senate health care bill, which now costs \$2.5 trillion, is 2,733 pages long, and includes \$518.5 billion in tax increases and \$470.7 billion in Medicare cuts.

"I am supportive of reforming health care so that all Americans have access to affordable, quality care. However, a bill created by backroom deal-making, partisan arm-twisting and special carve-outs for wavering senators does not represent meaningful reform.

"The already-strained budgets of individuals, families and small businesses will be pushed to the breaking point by the increase in taxes and increased costs for medical devices and medicine. The health care industry itself will also feel more than \$100 billion in taxes and fees, which will be shifted directly to the American people in the form of higher premiums.

"Over the past few weeks, several amendments were offered to strip the Medicare cuts and cuts to other critical health care programs, but unfortunately, those votes fell along party lines and the amendments failed. Several other amendments to improve the bill, like a tort reform measure I introduced, weren't even allowed to be called up for a vote.

"The process used to get this bill to 60 votes was unlike anything I had never seen before. Deals were cut behind closed doors for individual senators and their states at the expense of taxpayers across the nation - and that's just not right. The majority leader also made a compromise on abortion - where, morally, there can be no compromise - to get his 60th vote.

"And after all this, the health care bill does not even cover everyone. Some 23 million Americans will still be left uninsured.

"Americans are right to demand access to affordable health care. But the Senate bill is bad legislation. It is a political victory - not a substantive one - that will actually make health care more expensive."

Alexander Says Senate Health Bill

"Will Prove to Be an Historic Mistake"

Says Medicaid expansion and "sweetheart deals" will "force Tennessee tax increases, damage higher education—or both"

WASHINGTON - U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), chairman of the Senate Republican Conference, today issued the following statement on Senate passage of the Reid health care bill:

"The Senate health bill will prove to be an historic mistake if this or anything like it is ultimately signed by the president. Congress set out to reduce health care costs to Americans and Democrats have managed to do the exact opposite. Their written-in-secret bill will increase health insurance premiums, raise taxes, cut Medicare and dump millions of Americans into Medicaid. For Tennessee, Medicaid's expansion and the bill's 'sweetheart deals' would cost our state more than \$750 million over five years when fully implemented, forcing tax increases or damaging higher education—or both.

"Instead, we should start over and move step-by-step to reduce health care costs using the steps that Republicans have repeatedly proposed: let small businesses pool resources for health insurance; allow purchasing of health insurance across state lines; end junk lawsuits against doctors; eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse; expand health savings accounts; and promote wellness and prevention."

Corker Votes Against Reid Health Care Bill, Hopes for Bipartisanship in 2010

WASHINGTON - U.S. Senator Bob Corker, R-Tenn., made the following statement after voting against the Reid health care bill, which passed 60-39.

"I've spent almost three years and countless hours in bipartisan meetings working toward reforms that would enable all Americans to access affordable, private health insurance," said Corker. "I wanted a bipartisan health care reform bill that would stand the test of time. Instead, we were forced to vote on a 2,000-plus page, fundamentally flawed, partisan bill that expands Medicaid by sending \$25

billion in unfunded mandates to states, takes \$464 billion away from Medicare and leverages it to create a new entitlement, uses budget gimmickry to hide its true cost; increases federal costs, and actually causes Americans to face increased taxes and premiums. It's my sincere hope that Congress returns in 2010 more willing to work in a bipartisan fashion, and my work on financial regulatory reform gives me hope that that's possible."