



AMERICANS  
*for* TAX REFORM



Center for  
Fiscal  
Accountability

October 6, 2009

To: Members of the Senate Finance Committee  
RE: Vote No on the Committee's Healthcare Plan

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I write to urge you to vote No on the Committee's healthcare plan. During the hearings on amendments, the committee rejected the opportunity to instantiate real reform by adopting an amendment proposed by Sen. Jim Bunning which would have required the actual bill language, along with the final CBO score, to be posted online for 72 hours before the legislation could be voted on. The rejection of the amendment, coupled with last-minute changes to the bill that have not received appropriate public scrutiny, signals a disregard for accountability that cannot stand.

Given the breadth of health care reform, calls for transparency should not be taken lightly. This bill seeks to fundamentally reshape our healthcare system and carries a massive price tag the actual scope of which cannot fully be determined until the legislative language is made available to the CBO.

As CBO director Elmendorf himself pointed out in the context of the Bunning amendment deliberations:

*A formal cost estimate would require, we have said this to people on the House and Senate side, would really require two weeks of work by us, once a package is settled. And that may seem like a long time, but it - there are a lot of complications in doing this right, as you need it to be done and it is the interaction effects among the provisions, it is reading the legislative language.*

A preliminary score simply is not good enough, and Congress should take its time to weigh all its decisions carefully, while seeking more input from the public. Taxpayers feel this way, too: A recent Rasmussen poll shows that 83 percent of Americans want bills posted online in final form before Congress votes on them. Of this, 64 percent favor a two-week period, not just 72-hours. Taxpayers will no longer stand for a rushed and opaque legislative process.

Leaving the merits of the package, which we oppose, aside, the lack of an opportunity for both members and taxpayers to scrutinize the legislative language in its final form and its fiscal impact is reason enough to vote No on the Committee's healthcare plan, and we hope you will cast your vote accordingly.

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