



“Every time we’ve opposed [a Democratic bill,] we’ve offered what we thought was a better solution. Each and every time.” – GOP Leader John Boehner, Meet the Press, 8/8/10

LEADER BOEHNER’S “BETTER SOLUTIONS” FOR HEALTH CARE REPUBLICANS HAVE A VERY SPECIFIC HEALTH CARE AGENDA – AND IT WOULD TAKE AWAY VIRTUALLY ALL NEW BENEFITS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES, SENIORS, AND CONSUMERS

House Republicans have a very specific, clear “health reform” agenda – which they have embraced time and time again over the last several months – and **the American people should study this agenda carefully to learn exactly what the Republicans are offering.** It is the bill they offered on the House Floor as a substitute to the Affordable Care Act on November 7, 2009.

REPUBLICANS’ “BETTER SOLUTIONS” BILL: H.R. 5424, REFORM AMERICANS CAN AFFORD ACT

On June 30, 2010, the House GOP Leadership announced their endorsement of H.R. 5424, the “Reform Americans Can Afford Act,” introduced by Rep. Wally Herger (R-CA), and their strong support for a discharge on the bill. The “Reform Americans Can Afford Act” does two straightforward things:

- It repeals the Affordable Care Act; and
- It enacts H.R. 4038, the “Common Sense Health Care Reform and Affordability Act,” into law; which is the bill that Leader Boehner offered as the GOP substitute to health reform in November 2009.

H.R. 4038, the “Common Sense Health Care Reform and Affordability Act,” is a recycling of some of the deeply flawed, mostly minor ideas that Republicans have been peddling for a decade – such as Association Health Plans (which weaken consumer protections) and enormously expanding Health Savings Accounts (giving an additional tax shelter to the wealthiest families while doing nothing to expand coverage for the middle class.) The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office did an analysis of this GOP plan and here are some of its conclusions:

- **Substantially Less Deficit Reduction:** The GOP plan reduces the deficit by \$68 billion over the next 10 years, whereas the Affordable Care Act reduces the deficit by \$143 billion -- \$75 billion more.
- **Minimal or No Premium Savings for Most Americans:** CBO found that, for the vast majority of Americans (those in the large group market), the GOP bill only reduced premiums by zero to 3 percent compared to current law. By contrast, the nonpartisan Commonwealth Fund has estimated that, for those in the large group market, the Affordable Care Act reduced premiums by more than 9 percent.
- **Pay Less, Get Less:** CBO found that a significant factor in any premium savings from the GOP plan was from consumers purchasing plans with fewer benefits. In essence, CBO found that much of any savings came from the basic principle: pay less, and get less.
- **Fails to Cover the Uninsured:** The GOP plan covers just 3 million more Americans by 2019 – leaving 51 million Americans uninsured in 2019. Indeed, today, 17 percent of Americans are uninsured; under the GOP plan, 17 percent of Americans would remain uninsured in 2019. By contrast, the Affordable Care Act covers 32 million more Americans by 2019.

It is true that the GOP bill includes a couple of bipartisan reform provisions – which are also included in the Affordable Care Act – such as banning rescissions and requiring insurers to allow young people to stay on their parents’ policy until their 26th birthday.

However, the GOP bill fails to include virtually all of the other critical reforms that are included in the Affordable Care Act to provide vital consumer protections, reduce families’ costs, and expand access to affordable, meaningful coverage. Below is a summary of just some of the ways American families would lose if the GOP plan were enacted.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT	REPUBLICAN “BETTER SOLUTIONS” BILL
32 MILLION MORE INSURED 94% OF AMERICANS REDUCES DEFICIT BY \$143 BILLION	PREVENTS 29 MILLION AMERICANS FROM GETTING INSURED INCREASES DEFICIT BY \$75 BILLION
TAX CREDITS FOR 4 MILLION SMALL BUSINESSES TO MAKE HEALTH INSURANCE AFFORDABLE	WOULD BE REPEALED
CLOSING THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG ‘DONUT HOLE’ COVERAGE GAP FOR 4 MILLION SENIORS	WOULD BE REPEALED
EXTENDING THE SOLVENCY OF MEDICARE TRUST FUND FOR 12 YEARS	WOULD BE REPEALED
ENDING DISCRIMINATION FOR PRE-EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS	WOULD BE REPEALED
ENDING GENDER DISCRIMINATION	WOULD BE REPEALED
PROTECTING 50-60 YEAR OLDS WITH 3:1 AGE RATING	WOULD BE REPEALED
CREATING HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGES TO EXPAND ACCESS TO COVERAGE	WOULD BE REPEALED
TAX CREDITS TO HELP MAKE COVERAGE AFFORDABLE ON THE EXCHANGES	WOULD BE REPEALED
PROHIBITING ANNUAL LIMITS ON COVERAGE	WOULD BE REPEALED
PLACING AN ANNUAL CAP ON OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES	WOULD BE REPEALED
EXPANDED COVERAGE FOR EARLY RETIREES	WOULD BE REPEALED
NO CO-PAYS FOR PREVENTIVE CARE	WOULD BE REPEALED
RIGHT TO INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL APPEALS OF INSURANCE COMPANY’S DECISIONS	WOULD BE REPEALED
ENSURING MOST OF CONSUMERS’ PREMIUMS ARE SPENT ON HEALTH CARE, NOT PROFITS	WOULD BE REPEALED