

U.S. Senate Healthcare Repeal Bill Fails



For the third time, the Republican-dominated Senate has failed in its efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare). Through the so-called "skinny" repeal bill, Republicans had sought to scale back some of ACA's more controversial provisions, including the individual mandate requiring all Americans to have health insurance coverage or pay a fine, and the employer mandate, which requires the same of companies with 50 employees or more.

But the bill, officially known as the Health Care Freedom Act, was eventually voted down by 51 votes to 49 in the Senate. At least three Republicans – John McCain, Susan Collins and Lisa Murkowski –voted against the bill, which needed a simple majority to pass. President Donald Trump said the three senators had "let the American people down".

The slimmed-down bill would have resulted in 16 million people losing their health insurance by 2026, with insurance premiums increasing by 20%, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). It also would have temporarily repealed a tax on medical devices, as well as given states more flexibility in complying with Obamacare regulations.

Nonetheless, the pared-down measure would have left much of Obamacare untouched, including the expansion of Medicaid, a government health programme for the poor that faced deep cuts in earlier proposals. Federal subsidies to help consumers pay for insurance as well as taxes on wealthy Americans also would have remained in place.

The "skinny repeal" bill came after earlier Senate defeats for proposals to replace Obamacare and then to partially repeal it. Sen. McCain said he had voted against the bill because it did not amount to meaningful reform and would not have improved care for Americans.

With the GOP's latest defeat, the future of Obamacare repeal has been thrown into doubt. There are not thought to be any further plans for a new bill to repeal Obamacare because the skinny repeal was seen as the only measure Republicans could get through Congress. In his statement, the Arizona senator said Obamacare was in a state of "collapse", with healthcare premiums "skyrocketing" and providers "fleeing the marketplace".

However, lawmakers could revive the issue and take it up later in the year.

Texas Senator Ted Cruz insisted the fight was not over. "Mark my words, this journey is not yet done," he said.

Source: [BBC](#)

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