

## The Minnesota Free Market Institute Weekly Update Friday, November 13th, 2009

### Health Care Passes House, Senate Considers

Anybody watching C-Span last Saturday night would have seen a victorious Nancy Pelosi presiding over a 3-vote win in passing the "Affordable Health Care for America Act" ([text](#)). The measure passed with 39 Democrats voting against the bill and one lone Republican voting for it. Considered to be the most important component of President Obama's domestic agenda, the passage of the health care bill through the House marks a significant achievement for the Administration.



Minnesota Congressman Erik Paulsen reading the 1990 page health care bill.

However, the bill now shifts over to the Senate, where Democrats hold a much smaller majority. Two votes shy of the essential filibuster-proof majority, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid finds himself in a difficult numbers game. Independent Senator Joe Lieberman of Connecticut has pledged to join Republicans in a filibuster if a public option *is* included in the bill. He is not alone. A handful of Democrat senators have joined Lieberman in voicing their objections to a so-called public option, Sens. Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas, Ben Nelson of Nebraska, Evan Bayh of Indiana and Mary Landrieu of Louisiana. This presents a significant hurdle for Reid, who insists a public option must be included in the bill, a sentiment shared by controversial Illinois Senator Roland Burris. Burris has said that he will not vote for a bill lacking a public option, putting Reid in a legislative catch-22.

Ultimately, Reid's only option may be reconciliation, a process by which legislation cannot be filibustered by the minority (see reconciliation rules [here](#)). Reconciliation gives Reid 8 votes to create a compromise among Democrats. This should give Reid enough wiggle room to pass the legislation through the Senate.

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The Senate schedule for health care reform is ambitious, Reid wants to consider the bill next week, pass it in December and hammer the details out in conference in January.

## Minnesota's Senators on Health Care

**Senator Al Franken:** Minnesota's junior senator fully supports a public option saying:

"That's also what so much of the debate surrounding a public health insurance option is about. A public option creates more choice for consumers, and more competition in the marketplace. People who are happy with their current plan wouldn't need to change it. But millions of people who didn't have health care options before would finally have an affordable choice. This is what the overwhelming majority of Americans want. It's the right thing to do. And I would say to anyone who's against a public option - don't choose it for yourself, but don't deny other Americans that choice.

I remain steadfast in my support of a public option. But we should also recognize that a public option is just one of several ways that this bill seeks to control health care costs." ("[Sen. Franken Delivers His First Major Speech on Health Care](#)," 2009-11-04, [video](#))

Franken also separately introduced the "Fairness in Health Insurance Act" ([text](#)) mandating that "90 cents of every premium dollar must go to health services, not to unnecessary administrative costs, or advertising, or bloated executive salaries."

**Senator Amy Klobuchar:** Sen. Klobuchar has taken a much more measured tone toward health care reform. She supports the public option, but only when coupled with "cost reform" ([video](#) - 0:57)

"My view is this, if you were going to tie a public option to Medicare rates either explicitly or implicitly, you have to reform Medicare at the same time. And I think that is a prudent and long-term way of looking at this. We just can't pretend it's not happening, that Medicare is going to go in the red by 2017 or that premiums are going to double in ten years.

So both public option and that Medicare reform can work together to get better health care for people."

Klobuchar has also been fighting against the crippling 40 billion dollar tax on the medical device industry, an industry that

thrives in Minnesota with over 450 companies employing over 29,000 Minnesotans according to a DEED [analysis](#).

Senator Klobuchar's office can be reached at 1-888-224-9043 or by [email](#).

Senator Franken's office can be reached at (202) 224-5641 or by [email](#).

## Lord Monckton DVDs are Still Available

We are still taking requests for DVDs of Lord Christopher Monckton's October 14th address in St. Paul. If you are interested, please click [here](#) and fill out the contact form below the video.

## Must Reads

*Hot Air* - [October deficit bigger than expected](#)

*Boston Globe* - [FHA runs low on cash, fueling bailout concerns](#)

*Politico* - [After spending binge, White House says it will focus on deficits](#)

*Bloomberg*- [Home-Purchase Index in U.S. Plunges to Lowest Level Since 2000](#)

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*Comments and questions about the update can be sent to [Adam Axvig](#).*

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