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Re: Fixing our Health Care System

The election is over. The Republicans now control both houses of Congress and the Presidency and will soon control the Supreme Court. Will they use their majority to fix our health care system and replace it with a better one?

The short answer appears to be no. Their announced plan is to officially repeal the Affordable Care Act in January then keep it in operation for the next three or four more years maybe up to the next election in 2020. Thus the "repeal" in January is just a PR stunt. If the current plan is so terrible, why repeal it and then keep using it until the next election? What will that accomplish? Common sense would be to repeal it when you have something with which to replace it. In the meantime make changes as needed to keep people from falling through the floor. All the immediate repeal does is create uncertainty about what is going to happen next. The insurance industry won't know what lies ahead. Those who have health insurance they can afford will worry about when that will go away or change. There are indications that the health insurance industry is anxious to start cancelling policies. They can't afford to sit around losing money for the next three or four years while nothing is done. Without prompt action insurance rates and drug prices will keep going up faster than ever.

Republican leaders say their plan in three to four years will provide universal "Access". What exactly does "Access" mean? Is it the same as care? We have universal "access" now for those with money. Just pay for healthcare when you need it. Does universal access mean everyone gets a small voucher but if you need more care than your voucher covers you are out of luck? Does it mean medical bills above a certain level—catastrophic care---will be covered but patients pay a portion of routine care? Does it mean no one is denied care for pre-existing conditions? Will there be curbs on price gouging by drug companies? Will the voucher be indexed for inflation or capped so that it covers less and less over time?

We all need health care. The current system is expensive and troubled. It needs immediate attention not a fix in three or four years (if ever). This means we need to start right away. Republicans complained that they and the American people weren't adequately consulted on the previously plan. So let's see Congress get to work writing a new plan starting on January 20th not in three or four years. Let's urge them to consult with the American people and with the both parties and as we go along. Let's all work on this starting soon and do so across the aisle. The clock is ticking on both healthcare reform and on our democracy.

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