

Murphy Makes Last Push for Health Care Bill to Include Members of Congress in Federal Exchange

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WASHINGTON, DC - As the House and Senate enter the final days of negotiations on a comprehensive health care bill, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) is pushing Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi to include in the compromise a provision that would require Members of Congress and their staffs who wish to utilize government health insurance benefits to receive those benefits through the newly formed exchange. The purpose of the exchange is to force private plans to compete with each other to increase competition and lower costs for individuals, families and businesses. This provision was in the Senate bill, but not in the House bill.

"As we near the end of this long road, it's more important than ever for the American people to know that we here in Congress have a real stake in the outcome of this reform effort. And I can't think of a better way than to put Members of Congress who want federal health care in the exchange, which will be a fair marketplace with lots of options for people in Connecticut and across the country," said Murphy.

Murphy has been pushing for this idea to be incorporated in the bill since he heard about it from his constituents beginning in August. After hosting public events in Waterbury, Danbury, Meriden, Simsbury, Avon and Washington, Connecticut over the last six months and meeting with and hearing from constituents throughout last year on health care, Murphy urged House leadership to include the concept in their version of the bill before it was unveiled in late October.

Right before the House bill came to the floor for a vote in November, Murphy filed an amendment to require Members of Congress who take federal health care to purchase their insurance in the newly created health insurance exchange. While Murphy's amendment was not made in order, the Senate version of the bill included what he has been pushing. So he is taking this last opportunity to persuade the negotiators to include this concept in the final health care bill.

"We are closer than ever before in our quest to provide American families and small businesses with comprehensive, affordable health care. In order to give people confidence in the newly established health insurance exchange, it just makes sense for Members of Congress who take federal insurance to be the exchange's first customers," said Murphy.

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