



Written by [Steven J. DuBord](#) on November 6, 2009

AARP & AMA Support House Healthcare Bill

AARP, the 40-million-member senior-citizen lobbying group, and the American Medical Association, representing 250,000 physicians, on November 5 threw their support behind the healthcare reform bill being proposed by House Democrats.

Bolstered by this support, Democrats are preparing for a November 7 vote on their bill, H.R. 3962. AARP Executive Vice President Nancy LeaMond indicated on November 5 that her group thinks H.R. 3962 shows the most promise out of all the congressional bills.



Speaking at AARP's Washington headquarters, LeaMond stated, "We can say with confidence that it meets our priorities for protecting Medicare, providing more affordable insurance for 50- to 64-year-olds and reforming our healthcare system."

The AMA sees the House legislation as giving doctors a choice whether or not to participate in the public option. The association also believes that doctors who take part in the public plan will be paid at better rates than what they currently receive from Medicare.

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Some elements within the AMA are asking the organization are asking the group to reconsider its position, however. A resolution being brought before the AMA states, "These bills go far beyond what is necessary to fix what is broken with our healthcare system, and they grant the federal government considerable new powers and authority, which could ultimately amount to a complete government takeover of healthcare, and which is anathema to doctors and patients." The American Association of Neurological Surgeons, the American Society of General Surgeons, and the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery are jointly introducing the resolution. AMA delegations from Washington, D.C., and Georgia are also lending their support.

There are hints that the AMA is not as unified as they would like to appear. The *Los Angeles Times* reported on November 5 that "a source close to the AMA said its internal polling has shown doctors to be closely divided on a public option and healthcare reform proposed by Democrats, but 20% or more of doctors across the country also are undecided on what to support."

While the backing of AARP and the AMA gives the Democratic proposal a boost, there are still enough questions about abortion and illegal immigrants to cause even some Democrats to waiver in their support. Representative Brad Ellsworth (D-Ind.) offered language that would supposedly prevent federal money from funding abortions while still allowing people to use their own money to pay for them.

Pro-life groups judged the language to be deficient and nothing more than an accounting gimmick. Federal subsidies to allow people to buy coverage would not be sufficiently differentiated from private money used for abortions. Ellsworth's attempt at a compromise is "a political fig leaf made out of



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cellophane,” according to the National Right to Life Committee.

Illegal immigrants are not supposed to be eligible for federal subsidies to buy insurance, but Democrats haven’t resolved whether or not illegals should still be able to use the government exchanges to find insurance and purchase it with their own money. The White House does not currently want illegal immigrants to be allowed to use the exchanges, but the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and some liberal Democrats are applying pressure to remove the restriction.

H.R. 3962 is huge step toward government domination of American healthcare. Washington doesn’t even need to offer single-payer socialized medicine as long as it determines who can participate in the government exchanges and what kind of coverage insurers must offer if they want to sell through the exchanges. Uncle Sam would be calling the shots, and he could easily use federal power to see that the government-run plan dominates the marketplace.

The time to register opposition to the House healthcare bill is now. Americans can communicate with their representative about H.R. 3962 by [clicking here](#).



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