



Written by [Steven J. DuBord](#) on December 1, 2009

## Senate Healthcare Debate Begins

On November 30, the U.S. Senate began debating legislation that would change America's healthcare system by giving government even greater control. The increased role for government is being posited as necessary to provide healthcare to millions of uninsured Americans.

"There's not an issue more important than finishing this legislation," said Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) as he informed his fellow senators that there would be Saturday and Sunday sessions of Congress in December. Reid spoke of skyrocketing medical costs forcing Americans into bankruptcy and declared that Congress must deal with this issue now.



But Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) stated that the legislation carries too high a price tag — \$979 billion over 10 years — at a time when the nation is already staggering under a massive load of debt.

"The notion that we would even consider spending trillions of dollars we don't have in a way that the majority of Americans don't even want is proof that this health care bill is out of touch," McConnell declared.

Reid, however, is focused on his belief that the current legislation will make healthcare affordable to middle-class Americans, and he thinks that the time is right for reform to succeed where it has failed in the past.

"Generation after generation has called on us to fix this broken system," Reid said during a recent rally in Washington. "We're now closer than ever to getting it done."

The brokenness of which Reid speaks has actually been caused by government, and the only way to fix it is to undo what the government has done, not spend more money to let government do even more damage. When the government gave employment-based health insurance a tax break while refusing to do the same for individuals who must buy their own insurance, they did much more harm than good.

The government also established the managed-healthcare system in America and refused to protect the nation's border. Government figures on the number of people in America who are uninsured or underinsured now typically include illegal immigrants, conveniently making the problem seem even worse.

Yet still the current bill to give government greater power over healthcare advanced to the floor of the Senate by the minimum 60 votes required, all the votes coming only from Democrats and independents. Debate is expected to begin with both Democrats and Republicans each offering one amendment, but no votes were scheduled for Monday.



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Congressional budget experts have estimated that the proposed legislation would decrease the average price of insurance premiums, though millions of Americans would have to bear higher costs. The Republicans are almost unanimously in opposition to the bill, while Democrats are divided over such controversial aspects as abortion coverage and instituting a government-run public insurance option.

Reid would like to see finished legislation on the President's desk by Christmas, but even if the Senate worked quickly, the House also needs to approve its own bill, and both versions would need to be reconciled. That may be hard to squeeze into the next few weeks even with Saturday and Sunday sessions.

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