



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on July 18, 2017

Senate ObamaCare Replacement Fails, but Repeal May Be in the Cards

With the defection of two Republican senators, the GOP leadership's highly flawed ObamaCare replacement bill, the Better Care Replacement Act (BCRA), is effectively dead, at least for now — a development that may pave the way for a complete repeal of the healthcare law.

On Monday evening, as President Donald Trump was wining and dining selected senators to get them to vote for the BCRA, Senators Mike Lee (R-Utah) and Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) announced they would vote against the bill and, furthermore, would not even back a procedural vote that would bring it up for debate.



"After conferring with trusted experts ..., I have decided I cannot support the current version of the Better Care Reconciliation Act," Lee said in a [statement](#). "In addition to not repealing all of the Obamacare taxes, it doesn't go far enough in lowering premiums for middle class families; nor does it create enough free space from the most costly Obamacare regulations."

In his own [statement](#), Moran said, "There are serious problems with Obamacare, and my goal remains what it has been for a long time: to repeal and replace it. This closed-door process has yielded the BCRA, which fails to repeal the Affordable Care Act or address healthcare's rising costs. For the same reasons I could not support the previous version of this bill, I cannot support this one."

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With all Democrats opposed to the bill and the GOP enjoying only a two-vote majority, the loss of two more Republicans — Senators Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) had already announced their opposition — doomed the BCRA.

"Regretfully, it is now apparent that the effort to repeal and immediately replace the failure of Obamacare will not be successful," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said in a [statement](#).

There wasn't much in the BCRA for either conservatives or liberals to like. Liberals, of course, howled that it was taking health insurance away from people and making drastic cuts to Medicaid in the future — cuts that McConnell privately, and probably quite truthfully, told moderate senators would [never actually take place](#). Conservatives, on the other hand, charged that the bill didn't go nearly far enough, leaving much of ObamaCare on the books.

"The Senate Obamacare bill does not repeal Obamacare, it keeps it," Paul declared in a [Breitbart op-ed](#). "It keeps the majority of the Obamacare taxes. It keeps 10 out of 12 of the major Obamacare regulations. It allows continued, unsustainable expansion of Medicaid beyond the poor and disabled. It



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continues the idea that insurance should be subsidized by the taxpayers for nearly everyone, and it has a \$200 billion dollar bailout for insurance companies.”

The failure of the BCRA presents the possibility that Congress will actually repeal ObamaCare in full. In his statement, McConnell said the Senate would soon be voting on “a repeal of Obamacare with a two-year delay to provide for a stable transition period to a patient-centered health care system that gives Americans access to quality, affordable care.” That bill passed both houses of Congress in 2015 but was predictably vetoed by President Barack Obama. Whether it passes now will show just how serious Republicans were about their many promises to rid America of the unconstitutional, disastrous law.

The early signs are promising. According to [The Hill](#), after Lee and Moran’s announcement, House Freedom Caucus chairman Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) and former chairman Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) Tweeted that Republicans should get behind the repeal effort. Paul Tweeted, “Clean repeal now!” Trump joined the Twitter chorus, writing, “Republicans should just REPEAL failing ObamaCare now & work on a new Healthcare Plan that will start from a clean slate. Dems will join in!” And a White House official issued a statement saying, “Inaction is not an option. We look forward to Congress continuing to work toward a bill the President can sign to end the Obamacare nightmare and restore quality care at affordable prices.”

When the Senate will get around to voting on repeal is “not clear,” said *The Hill*. It is in session until August 11 and will then take a recess until early September. Still, a delayed vote to scrap ObamaCare is vastly preferable to a rushed one to impose ObamaCare Lite.



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