



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on September 27, 2013

With GOP Help, Senate Restores Funding for ObamaCare

Despite pressure from conservative Republicans, most notably [Sen. Ted Cruz](#) (R-Texas), on Friday the Senate passed a continuing resolution (CR) that restores funding for ObamaCare, with nearly two dozen Republican senators helping it on its way. The fate of ObamaCare is now back in the hands of the House of Representatives, led by Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio).



The key vote concerned cloture, which closes debate on a bill and allows it to be amended and brought up for a final vote. In his [21-hour speech](#) earlier this week, Cruz had urged fellow Republicans not to vote for cloture even though the CR under consideration, which had already passed the House, did not contain funding for ObamaCare. Cruz and other conservatives such as Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) feared — justifiably so, it turns out — that once cloture was achieved, Democrats would amend the CR to restore funding for the healthcare law.

“Any Republican who votes ... to invoke cloture will be voting alongside Majority Leader Harry Reid [D-Nev.] to give Leader Reid the authority to fund ObamaCare using just 51 votes on a straight party-line vote, which is exactly how ObamaCare passed in the first place,” Cruz [said](#) during his talkathon.

Democrats, of course, found Cruz’s approach distasteful. In a speech before the cloture vote, Reid “denounced as ‘anarchists’ tea party-backed Republicans who he said were driving the country toward economic devastation,” according to the [Washington Post](#).

“Today the Republican Party has been infected by a small destructive faction,” Reid said. “These extremists are more interested in putting on a show, as one Republican colleague put it, than legislating.”

President Barack Obama, in an email sent Friday to supporters, blamed “a group of far-right Republicans in Congress” for allegedly endangering the economy by bringing the government to the brink of shutting down.

“They refuse to pass a budget unless I let them sabotage Obamacare, something they know is not going to happen. Now, we’re left with only four days before a government shutdown,” he wrote. “This is reckless and irresponsible. Republicans are not focused on what’s best for you. They’re playing political games.”

Not all Republicans agreed with Cruz’s strategy, either. Some, such as Senate Minority Whip John



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Cornyn (R-Texas), argued that they couldn't very well vote against a resolution that did exactly what they want, namely fund all government operations except ObamaCare.

"Furthermore," wrote the [Los Angeles Times](#), "those Republicans also said acting quickly to return the bill to the House served the cause of undermining the [healthcare] law ... because the GOP majority there would have time to attach alternative amendments that might have a greater chance of being passed in the Senate."

When it came time to vote, 23 Republicans joined all 54 Democrats in voting to invoke cloture.

True to his word, Reid then introduced an amendment restoring funding for ObamaCare. That amendment, and then the [amended CR](#), passed the Senate on a party-line vote, 54-44.

"Today's vote by Sen. Harry Reid and the Senate Democrats to fully fund Obamacare was yet the latest example of Washington not listening to the people," Cruz said in a statement. He called the healthcare law "the biggest job killer in America" and criticized Democrats for "granting exemptions for big business and Members of Congress" but not for "the American people."

"But this fight continues," he added. "Now the bill returns to the House. The House showed remarkable courage voting to defund Obamacare, and I hope and believe that the House will stand by their resolve and continue to lead the effort to stop the Obamacare train wreck." He then urged his fellow senators to "rise to the challenge" and do likewise.

One reason Cruz is confident that the House will stand firm on defunding ObamaCare through the CR is that he has been working behind the scenes to ensure such an outcome. [National Review Online](#) reports that the Texas senator has been consulting with a group of House conservatives to come up with a response to their leadership's strategy vis-à-vis ObamaCare.

Boehner and other House leaders seem to believe that they cannot wring any significant concessions on ObamaCare out of Democrats via the CR and are instead pinning their hopes on upcoming debt-ceiling negotiations. Cruz, however, told the conservative congressmen "that Boehner was making a mistake, and urged his friends to fight until the end on the CR," wrote Robert Costa. "The group agreed, and they complained that Boehner's shift to the debt limit was a diversion." At the very least, they plan to demand a one-year delay of ObamaCare in exchange for their votes to pass the CR.

At this point, no one seems to know just what Boehner's plans are. "As of Friday morning," noted the *Post*, "the House remained in total confusion about how to proceed."

"Some members favor a 'stick' approach — an amendment so distasteful to Democrats that they might feel compelled to return to the negotiating table," the paper reported. "Others favor a 'carrot' approach, attaching an item Democrats would find hard to refuse — including possibly delaying sequestration cuts for a year in exchange for delaying implementation of Obamacare for a year."

Senate Democrats, meanwhile, insist that any anti-ObamaCare amendments will be declared dead on arrival and could delay passage of the CR beyond Monday, at which point the government will run out of funds to operate.

"We are going to accept nothing as it relates to Obamacare," Reid said Friday. "There's a time and place for everything, and this is not that place."

For now, the time and place are this weekend in the House of Representatives. Then, if Cruz and his allies in the lower chamber get their way, the Senate will — much to Democrats' dismay — once more be forced to consider a CR that delays or defunds ObamaCare.



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Larry Greenley, director of missions for [The John Birch Society](#), said in a statement:

Ever since we first heard about the Defund ObamaCare initiative back in July, The John Birch Society has supported it. Since ObamaCare will be a disaster for our health care system, we must do whatever we can to defund and ultimately repeal it. We applaud the efforts of Senators Ted Cruz, Mike Lee, Rand Paul, and others who have been pursuing the defunding strategy. Today's 79 to 19 cloture vote in the Senate was a setback for the defund strategy because it allowed the Senate Democrats to strip ObamaCare defunding out of the House bill and send it back to the House with only a simple majority vote. However, this defunding battle is not over. We hope, along with Senator Cruz, that a majority of the House and Senate can still end up agreeing on a bill to defund ObamaCare.

With the next phase of ObamaCare's implementation, open enrollment in insurance exchanges, just days away, there's no better time to starve the beast.



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