

Congressman Rothman Casts Historic Vote in Favor of Health Care Reform

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(Washington, DC) — Today Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) voted in favor of the Affordable Health Care for America Act. This legislation passed the House of Representatives by a bipartisan vote of 220 to 215. The bill helps seniors by extending the life of the Medicare Trust Fund and immediately reducing the Medicare Part-D “donut hole” by \$500 and eliminating it entirely by 2019. It also provides affordable, quality health insurance for 36 million American citizens who are currently uninsured, prevents millions of Americans from being forced into bankruptcy due to medical bills, and ends discrimination based on “pre-existing conditions.”

“This reform will not mimic the health care system in Great Britain, Canada or anywhere else,” Rothman said. “It is a uniquely American solution to the American health care crisis, building on what works well in our current system, correcting the parts that have failed us, and most of all, addressing the preferences of the vast majority of Americans and of New Jersey’s citizens.”

“This is probably the most important domestic policy vote I have cast in my 13 years in Congress,” said Rothman. “Over the past few months, I have listened to the opinions of my constituents, whether they agreed with me, or not. They have shared their views on health care reform by writing me letters and emails, calling my office, and attending the ten town hall meetings I hosted over the summer. The vast majority agree that the status-quo of our dysfunctional, wasteful, and unfair health care system is simply unsustainable. While America’s present health system offers some of the world’s best medical care, ever-increasing millions of Americans are denied access to this care, because they cannot afford it.”

“I understand that some Americans are skeptical of these reform efforts and afraid of the proposed changes they’ve heard about. I think it is important to clear up some misconceptions about this legislation: This bill does not represent “government-run” or nationalized health care for Americans — no one will be forced to choose a public plan; it will not cause care to be rationed; it will not fund abortions with federal tax dollars; it will not cover those in our country illegally; and most importantly it will not add to our national debt — in fact, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimates this reform will reduce the national deficit by \$109 billion over the first 10 years alone,” added Rothman.

This legislation will:

- Insure 36 million American citizens who currently don’t have health insurance.
- Protect seniors’ Medicare benefits, by ensuring that the Medicare Trust Fund will not run out of money.
- Provide seniors who are stuck in the donut hole with a 50% discount on their brand-name prescription drugs.
- End discrimination based on “pre-existing conditions,” like diabetes, heart disease, or cancer.

- Make it illegal for insurance companies to drop coverage, or place limits on care.
- Cap the amount that individuals and families spend out-of-pocket on health care.
- Allow young people to remain on their parents' health insurance plan through age 27.
- Allow those who are currently uninsured to choose quality, affordable health insurance from a menu of several private options and one public option — no one will be forced to choose the public option.
- Provide credits to low income Americans and small businesses to help them purchase health insurance.
- Prevent health care costs from continuing to increase by an average of \$1,800 each year.
- Institute profound changes to the way we reimburse doctors, by basing payments on quality of care received instead of on the number of procedures performed.
- Provide new incentives for young people to enter the workforce as primary care physicians and nurses.
- Eliminate copayments for preventative and wellness care.

“As a strong supporter of a Medicare-for-all health insurance system, this bill will not deliver the kind of complete overhaul that I prefer,” said Congressman Rothman. “However, it represents historic progress, significantly improving the status-quo by achieving security for those Americans who currently have health insurance, providing affordable coverage to those who do not, and reducing costs for all of us in the long term.”

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