



Anticipated Road to Passing Health Care Reform

In December, the Senate passed the health care reform bill, H.R. 3590, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Senate's bill). Now the House of Representatives is expected to vote on H.R. 3590. Currently, it is anticipated the vote will occur on **Sunday, March 21, 2010**.

How We Got Here

The Senate health care reform bill differs from the House health care reform bill and contains many provisions that are unpopular in the House. In January, the Senate Democrats' lost their filibuster proof majority in the Senate. Now that the health reform bill has advanced, Democratic leaders are concerned about securing votes to overcome a filibuster in the Senate.

The Democratic leadership has decided to proceed with a general strategy for the successful passage of health care reform.

- (1) The House needs to pass the Senate bill and then,
- (2) The House needs to pass a bill with amendments to the Senate bill. This will be done through a parliamentary process known as reconciliation (reconciliation bill). The advantage of this strategy is that the Senate will then only need a simple majority (not the 60 votes needed to avoid a filibuster) to pass the reconciliation bill.

Next Steps

Steps to enacting **health care reform**:

1. House Rules Committee Passes Rule
2. House passes the Senate bill
3. Senate bill is signed into law
4. House passes budget reconciliation bill
5. Senate passes reconciliation bill
6. Reconciliation bill is signed into law



STEP ONE: HOUSE RULES COMMITTEE PASSES RULE ON DEBATE

In order for any legislation to be considered by the House, a resolution (also known as a "Rule") must be adopted by the House before debate can begin. The Rules Committee is expected to meet Saturday to craft the Rule. The rule outlines the structure of debate on a piece of legislation, including the length of debate, how many amendments can be considered, etc.

When: Rules Committee will likely meet on Saturday, March 20, 2010 at 10:00 am

STEP TWO: HOUSE PASSES THE SENATE BILL

The Senate bill is largely unpopular in the House and Democratic leadership wants to avoid forcing members to take a vote on an unpopular bill. It is likely that the House will construct a Rule for the budget reconciliation bill. It could be dictated that upon adoption of the rule, the Senate bill will be "deemed" passed by the House of Representatives. This allows the House to quickly pass the Senate bill as part of the rule for reconciliation, without having members vote on the Senate bill itself. Thus, a vote in favor of the rule is essentially a vote in favor of the Senate bill.

The vote count is very close, at this time, and it is not confirmed one way or the other how the votes will come down. When the house leadership thinks it has the votes together, it will schedule the reconciliation vote on the House floor.

When: House will likely vote on Sunday afternoon

STEP THREE: SENATE BILL SIGNED INTO LAW

Upon adoption of the rule, whether or not the reconciliation bill passes, the Senate bill will be sent to the President to be enacted into law. The Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCA) and the many other provisions for Indian Country contained in the Senate bill will become law.

When: TBD

STEP FOUR: HOUSE PASSES BUDGET RECONCILIATION BILL

After the House adopts the rule, it can then consider a reconciliation bill. The House will debate the reconciliation bill for a length of time yet to be determined. After debate, the House will then vote on the reconciliation bill. If it passes, it will be sent to the Senate.

When: House will likely vote on Sunday

STEPS FIVE AND SIX: SENATE PASSES RECONCILIATION BILL AND PRESIDENT SIGNS IT INTO LAW

After House passage, the reconciliation bill will be sent to the Senate. It will be more complex. During this process an unlimited number of amendments can be offered. That basically means no deal can be struck to bring the bill to a vote. Senate rules also have stringent requirements on what the content of a reconciliation bill can and cannot include. It is expected that several hundred amendments will be filed, and also that points of order against the bill itself will also be made.

There are **three** (3) possible outcomes of the Senate Vote on the reconciliation bill.

1. **Reconciliation bill with amendments: Senate passes**
Senate passes bill, but due to new amendments added the bill must be sent back to the House for the House to vote on.
2. **Reconciliation bill with NO amendments: Senate passes**
If passed by the Senate, the bill will be sent to President Obama to be signed into law.
3. **Reconciliation bill: Senate does not pass**
Reconciliation bill fails.

When: Next Week before the Senate departs for their Spring recess

Now more than ever, your Members of Congress need to hear from **YOU!**
Let them know **Indian Country** wants them to vote **YES** for health care reform, because it is health care for **all** Americans.

Visit the website: <http://www.nihb.org>

National Indian Health Board



For more information on this publication, or if you have any questions please contact NIHB's Legislative Director Jennifer Cooper

jcooper@nihb.org

National Indian Health Board and HCR

The NIHB has advocated in support of the Senate bill because it includes the permanent reauthorization of the IHCA and protects the Indian health care system from the broader changes instituted in the health care reform bill.

Debate over the weekend will focus on process—the self-executing passage of Senate bill—and the general philosophies of those that support (affordability, greater coverage, better quality) and those that oppose the bill (government take over of health care, too expensive, start over), rather than on specific provisions in the bill (i.e. IHCA). Abortion will likely be one of the specific topics in the bill that will be discussed during the debate of the rule and reconciliation.

Additionally, debate on the rule typically lasts for one hour, meaning the ability and need to provide rapid response on issues is extremely limited. Further, in such high profile legislation, issues pertaining to Indian Country will not be raised during such limited debate.

The role of the National Indian Health Board during debate of the rule will be to provide procedural updates during consideration of the rule and the reconciliation debate to Indian Country.

For further questions, contact National Indian Health Board Legislative Director Jennifer cooper at jcooper@nihb.org or Legislative Assistant Dennis Worden at dworden@nihb.org.



National Indian Health Board

NIHB Public Health Summit

Albuquerque, New Mexico
May 18-20, 2010

Our American Indian and Alaska Native Communities enter a new decade where embracing public health interventions can only improve the lives of our families.

* Register * Sponsor * Exhibit * Present *

www.nihb.org

2010: A New Decade of Indigenous Public Health