

## DAMN THE TORPEDOES, FULL STEAM AHEAD FOR HEALTHCARE BILL

Contributed by Jeff Crouere  
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House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is sounding desperate these days. Her impatience is evident as the healthcare debate drags on and her Democratic majority in the House is threatened.

While the Democrats currently have a comfortable margin in Congress, it is not insurmountable. Republicans need to pick-up only 40 seats in November and the GOP will target the 48 congressional Democrats serving in districts won by McCain in the 2008 election.

Over the past few months, the healthcare debate has been a major loser for Democrats as tea parties and town hall meetings have galvanized opposition to the bill and generated enthusiasm for the GOP. While Republicans participated in the ridiculous farce of a healthcare summit last week, they did not retreat from their objections with the President's \$2.5 trillion bill.

Right now, Democrats are trying to find some formula that will work in Congress. The Senate and House bills are very different and the President's modified plan, which was presented last week, is still 2,400 pages. Another version of the bill was proposed this week that Pelosi exclaimed was "much smaller." In reality, all of the bills produce the same end result, government control of our country's healthcare system.

Democrats are determined to pass some type of bill, even if it will cost them their House majority. They have invested so much political capital and time on the issue that a complete defeat would be humiliating. Yet, as they move full steam ahead, the political torpedoes are everywhere for the Democrats.

Without question, the issue creates problems for the Democrats as the vast majority of Americans are steadfastly opposed. According to the latest CNN poll, only 25% of Americans support the bills that have been approved by Congress. The poll indicates that 75% of Americans want Congress to start over or stop work on the healthcare bill altogether.

As the Democrats remain

preoccupied with a healthcare bill, the American people are getting angrier. Voters who elect members of Congress don't like their wishes to be disregarded so completely. The American people want immediate action on the economy, not a \$2.5 trillion expansion of government in the healthcare arena. The whole debate is quite a distraction from the real work on the economy that Americans are demanding. Just this month, another 36,000 Americans lost their jobs.

The Democrats will probably advocate a "reconciliation" vote that will require only a majority of Senators. While this maneuver has been done in the past by Republicans, it has never been used on an issue so unpopular with the American people and something that has such a huge impact on our economy. Regardless of whether reconciliation is used or not, it is clear that the longer the President and his Democratic allies are obsessed on the healthcare issue, the easier it will be for Republicans to take control of Congress this fall.

Even a smaller bill will allow the government to lay the groundwork for a much larger healthcare role in the future. It is always easier to grow a government program than to rescind it. Democrats know that if they pass a bill this year, the GOP will not stop it from growing next year and the year after. Over time, all government bureaucracies tend to become larger and more expensive.

To prevent a massive expansion of government, Republicans need to defeat this measure and prevent a new bureaucracy from being created. The GOP is now working on behalf of the American people while the Democrats are clearly doing the bidding of special interests and bureaucrats. The different agendas are both disturbing and clear to all Americans, who will remember this historic debate in November.