

Healthcare Summit 2010: A Quick and Dirty Breakdown

Yesterday, the Center watched the Healthcare Summit with eagle eyes and took rapid fire notes to share with our supporters. Take a look and let us know if this type of breakdown is helpful. We aim to please ☺.

The Dems sidestepped the reconciliation issue all day, but in his final statement Obama advised the Republicans to do some “soul-searching” and see if they can work with Dems to come up with real fixes to the issues of contention; if not, he said he suspects there will be a lot of arguments over procedure in Congress — which sure sounded like a thinly veiled reconciliation threat.

Some notes on abortion and reconciliation follow. The *New York Times* also updated a blog about the summit fairly regularly all day long:

<http://prescriptions.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/02/25/blogging-the-health-care-summit/>

Abortion

- Around 3:15, Rep. Boehner reminded Obama that abortion provisions caused quite a serious discussion in the House and that “the House spoke” [with the Stupak amendment]. Noting that Obama’s proposal does not address abortion, Boehner then claimed that the Senate bill “for the first time in 30 years allows for the taxpayer funding of abortions.”
- Obama responded by pointing out that this and other topics raised by Boehner were not on point with the subject they were supposed to be focusing on then, which was deficit reduction. He also says in general that some of Boehner’s comments were “not true.” Obama also griped that “standard talking points” keep getting whipped out just as discussions begin to make progress on the topics at hand.
- During her closing remarks, Speaker Pelosi made the only other comment of the day about abortion, stating: “...the law of the land is there is no public funding of abortion, and there is no public funding of abortion in these bills.”

Reconciliation?

- Sen. Alexander was called on by McConnell to make the Republican opening statement. Alexander called on Obama to renounce the reconciliation process and start over. Other Republicans throughout the day echoed the belief that we have to start over completely.
- In response to Alexander's statements, Sen. Reid started by saying that “no one has talked about reconciliation” and then sort of clarified/qualified that by saying

that he and the speaker haven't talked about reconciliation *as the only way* of moving forward. He then argued that reconciliation is not a radical measure, and Republicans have used it many times to do big things.

- McConnell then "reminded" the group that the polls out there on average show the American people are opposed to the legislation as it now stands and that today's Gallup poll says they are opposed to reconciliation.
- Around 3:30, McCain said he wanted to address the elephant in the room, which he identified as the issue of whether the speaker is going to push legislation through with reconciliation. He said he has some sympathy for a majority that finds itself not able to get its legislation through, but reminded everyone that he was part of a group that helped stop Republicans from going for a simple majority in pushing judicial nominations through.
- Obama responded that he does not think the American people are interested in procedures that take place inside the Senate. What they are interested in is a vote to move things forward, and that a majority vote makes sense to the people. Obama then said that the current session might be able to bridge some differences, however.
- At the end of the day, McConnell reminded everyone about the polls opposing the legislation and reconciliation.
- Obama responded by saying that a lot of polls show that the American people agree on many of the varying provisions when they are asked about one issue at a time.
- See comments above about Obama's final statement, hinting at reconciliation.

☺ Funny Exchanges between Obama and McCain ☺

- Obama to McCain: "Let me just make this point, John, because we are not campaigning anymore. The election is over."
- McCain (chuckling): "I'm reminded of that everyday."
- -----(later)-----
- McCain to Obama: "I pay close attention to all of your speeches."
- Obama: "Thank you. That's more than Michelle does."