

PRESIDENT TRUMP STEPS BACK ON HEALTH CARE; DEMOCRATS PUSH REVERSAL OF DOJ STANCE

President Donald Trump recently told Senate Republicans that the Department of Justice's call for a federal court to scrap the Affordable Care Act (ACA) provides an opportunity for Congress to improve health care, but Senate Republicans seemed unsure of that and expressed confusion over the administration's shifting stance. The President told Republican senators they must now protect people with preexisting conditions and the GOP is the party of health care.

Subsequently, President Trump tapped Senators John Barrasso (R-WY), Rick Scott (R-FL) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA) to craft a health care plan that could replace the Affordable Care Act should the Supreme Court strike it down as he expects.

President Trump recently stepped back his demand that the Senate immediately craft a health bill to replace the ACA, following a conversation with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), and is now saying that a plan will be voted on after the 2020 elections.

Health care stakeholders remain fixated on the lawsuit over the Affordable Care Act's constitutionality as key Republican and Democratic senators urge Attorney General William Barr to explain the Department of Justice's (DOJ's) surprise move to call for the entire health law to be scrapped and as stakeholders file "friend of the court" briefs in the controversial case, *Texas v. Azar*, which is now on appeal at the Fifth Circuit Court.

The DOJ's surprised pivot spurred an uproar from lawmakers, ACA advocates, the health care industry and legal experts who said the move upends the president's constitutional duty to enforce an existing law that can reasonably be defended.

Democrats in the House and Senate are ramping up their opposition to the administration's attempt to kill the entire ACA via the courts with resolutions that demand the Department of Justice reverse its position and defend the law. ■