

This Week in Health Care Reform: June 11, 2010

Primary elections were held in 11 states this week as lawmakers returned to Washington to face a growing list of unfinished legislative business, including a jobs bill and environmental issues stemming from the Gulf crisis. Meanwhile, President Obama launched a public relations campaign to combat skepticism around his new health care reform legislation and to promote the early implementation of certain provisions of the law.

As the health care reform debate continues to take shape this year, we encourage you and others to engage Members of Congress by visiting the [Health Action Network](#).

Health Care Reform

Health Care Reform Debate Alive and Well: Democrats continue to sell their plan for health care reform to Americans in the face of mixed public opinion, simultaneously battling Republicans pushing for its repeal.

Congressional [lawmakers](#) address concerns about the new health care reform legislation, particularly among senior [citizens](#), who make up a disproportionate share of voters in midterm elections. Democrats and the Administration are eager to publicize certain [provisions](#) of the bill, like retaining young adults on their parents' plans until age 26, as a way to gain support and to turn voters away from Republicans who called for its repeal.

On [Tuesday](#), President Obama held a nationally televised town hall meeting at a senior center in [Maryland](#) to highlight the distribution of \$250 rebate [checks](#) for senior citizens who hit the so-called “[doughnut hole](#)” in Medicare's prescription drug coverage. The first round of checks was mailed yesterday and serves as the law's first monetary benefit.

State Battle against Health Care Reform Law Continues: On [Monday](#), Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli disputed the Administration's claim that the state lacks standing to challenge the new federal health care reform law. The lawsuit filed by [Cuccinelli](#) in the Eastern District Court cites a Virginia law that exempts state residents from being required to have health care coverage. [Sebelius](#) argued that states cannot simply pass a statute that would nullify a federal law. A hearing to determine next steps is set for July 1.

Public Opinion

Americans Want Repeal of Health Care Reform: A recently released [Rasmussen report](#) suggests that Americans are strongly in favor of repealing President Obama's health care reform law. Fifty-eight percent of those polled favor repeal, while 62 percent believe the new legislation will increase the budget deficit. In addition, 57 percent predict health care costs will increase, while 51 percent feel the quality of care will decrease as a result of the new health care reform law.

Looking Ahead

Democratic lawmakers are expecting to pass the jobs bill next week but will need Republican support in order to get the 60 votes needed for passage. One provision of the bill, a 21 percent cut in Medicare payments to doctors, is being delayed as the bill moves through Congress and would ultimately be blocked if the legislation passes.