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Dear Sen. Reid: It's Time for Leadership To Put Its Money Where Its Mouth Is On Transparency

Americans for Tax Reform and Center for Fiscal Accountability call on Reid to post merged health bill and final score online for five days before further action

WASHINGTON, DC – Americans for Tax Reform and its Center for Fiscal Accountability today called on Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) to allow taxpayers to scrutinize the merged Health, Education, Labor & Pensions committee bill and Finance committee bill by posting it online as soon as it becomes available and to commit to having the bill and the *final* score for the final merged bill online for five consecutive days before any further action on the bill.

From the letter:

Taxpayers, who ultimately pick up the tab for every bill Congress passes, deserve greater accountability than they have recently been provided with. From the way the “stimulus” package was passed to the way healthcare negotiations are currently being led behind closed doors – taxpayers deserve better, especially from a Senate Leader who once pledged: “No longer can we allow special interests and lawmakers to conspire behind closed doors. We need transparency.”

The attempt to pass the ten-year “doc fix” bill without spending cut offset was yet another attempt to obfuscate the real cost of the healthcare overhaul you and your colleagues are seeking. But the time for shenanigans is over.

On behalf of taxpayers, we urge you to make the full text of the merged health bill along with the final CBO score for this merged version available for public review at your earliest convenience, and for a minimum of five full consecutive days (excluding weekends and holidays) in a searchable form before moving the bill further.

Given the impact federal legislation has on all American taxpayers, a preliminary score of the health bill would simply not be good enough. Congress should take its time to weigh all its decisions carefully, while seeking more input from the public, who should be given the opportunity to partake in political discourse.

Says ATR president Grover Norquist: **“It is time that Congressional leadership finally puts its money where its mouth is. Sen. Reid would be well advised to listen to the American people who are becoming increasingly disaffected by the way they’re being kept in the dark about the real cost of this overhaul. Really, given the scope of this package, asking for a month to scrutinize the bill and all its consequences would not be asking too much. Certainly, Congress should be able to spare a week or two for something of this magnitude. Taxpayers deserve no less.”**

Americans for Tax Reform is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all tax increases. The Center for Fiscal Accountability, a project of Americans for Tax Reform, seeks to shed a light on government expenditures, and to promote transparency, accountability, and restraint in government finance. For more information or to arrange an interview please contact John Kartch at (202) 785-0266 or by email at jkartch@atr.org.

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