



LATEST NEWS PROTESTERS PLAN MORE MASS RALLIES IN IRAN

Quotes, New



Top News

Reuters top ten news stories delivered to your inbox each day.

Subscribe

ou are here: [Home](#) > [News](#) > [U.S.](#) > Article

DJIA : 8612.13 -187.13 -

- HOME
- BUSINESS & FINANCE
- NEWS

U.S.
Swine Flu

Politics

International

Technology

Entertainment

Sports

Lifestyle

Oddly Enough

Health

Science

Special Coverage

Video

Pictures

Your View

The Great Debate

Blogs

Weather

Reader Feedback

Do More With Reuters

- RSS
- Widgets
- Mobile
- Podcasts
- Newsletters
- Your View
- Make Reuters My Homepage

Partner Services

CareerBuilder

Votes seen lacking for Obama healthcare program

Sun Jun 14, 2009 12:13pm EDT

[Email](#) | [Print](#) | [Share](#) | [Reprints](#) | [Single Page](#)

[\[-\] Text](#) [\[+\]](#)

* Key senator says votes lacking for public insurance plan

* Biden says taxing benefits 'wrong way' to pay for reform

* Co-ops touted as possible compromise solution

By Will Dunham

WASHINGTON, June 14 (Reuters) - President Barack Obama's health secretary on Sunday pushed for a new government-run healthcare program, an idea facing skepticism even in his own party, and a senior Senate Democrat flatly said votes are lacking in Congress for the proposal.

In addition, Vice President Joe Biden opposed proposals being discussed by some lawmakers to tax health insurance benefits provided to people by employers as a way to pay for an overhaul of the \$2.5 trillion U.S. healthcare industry.

Obama, aiming to get healthcare costs under control and ensure that the 46 million Americans who are uninsured can get health coverage, wants a new public program to compete with private insurers.

"The president feels that having a 'public option' side by side -- same playing field, same rules -- will give Americans choice and will help lower costs for everybody. And that's a good thing," Sebelius told CNN.

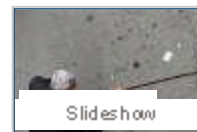
"The president does not want to dismantle privately owned plans. He doesn't want the 180 million people who have employer coverage to lose that coverage. He wants to strengthen the marketplace," Sebelius added.

Healthcare costs undermine the competitiveness of U.S. companies, drive many families into bankruptcy and eat up a growing portion of state and federal spending.

Versions of healthcare legislation unveiled by senior Democrats in the House and Senate include a new government insurance program. But Republicans are adamantly opposed to the idea, saying it could harm private insurers, and some of Obama's fellow Democrats are against it, too.

'VERY GOOD ARGUMENTS'

EDITOR'S CHOICE



MOST POPULAR

[Articles](#) | [Video](#)

1. [CIA chief wants US](#)
2. [Protesters pl Iran](#) | [Vic](#)
3. [Votes seen I program](#)
4. [Is the housin](#)
5. [Qatar orders display](#) |
6. [Ancient mas](#)
7. [UPDATE 2-E "horrific" -Bo](#)
8. [Alaska's Rat](#)
9. [EU leads into vote](#)
10. [Ford nimble chairman](#)

[Most Popular A](#)

TODAY ON REUTE

Obama: Gov could go bro healthcare n

President Barack (government could fate as troubled au broke if the health

[Affiliate Network](#)

Professional Products

[Support \(Customer Zone\)](#)

[Reuters Media](#)

[Financial Products](#)

About Thomson Reuters

Kent Conrad, chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, said there is not enough support in Congress for the "public option" even though proponents offer "very good arguments" for it.

"You've got to attract some Republicans as well as holding virtually all of the Democrats together. And that, I don't believe, is possible with the pure 'public option.' I don't think the votes are there," Conrad said on CNN.

There already are large public health insurance programs like the Medicare program for those over 65 and the disabled and the Medicaid for the poor. Obama envisions a program for those not already covered by existing public plans.

Conrad has proposed an alternative to a new public program -- a system of federally chartered insurance cooperatives that could be a nonprofit alternative to the insurance industry.

Susan Collins, one of the few moderate Senate Republicans, said on CNN this was an intriguing idea that could serve as a compromise between those for and against a new public plan.

Obama on Monday is set to address the American Medical Association, which represents the nation's doctors and has voiced skepticism about a broad new public plan but willingness to consider other proposals including the cooperatives.

Sebelius did not embrace the proposal but also did not dismiss it, saying, "There is no one-size-fits-all idea."

Biden, on the NBC program "Meet the Press," also signaled Obama's flexibility on the nature of a new public plan.

Most Americans with health insurance get it through an employer. During last year's presidential election, Obama derided the idea of taxing employer-provided health benefits.

But some lawmakers have revived the idea as a way to paying for the healthcare overhaul. "We've made it clear we do not think that is the way to go. We think that is the wrong way to finance this legislation," Biden said. (Additional reporting by David Alexander and David Morgan; Editing by Eric Walsh)

**Threats, viol
eroding abor**

The patients are g
the protesters. On
anti-abortion picke
clinic run by murde
with workers shutt

**Susan Boyle
tour after "re**

Susan Boyle, who
the world over afte
the "Britain's Got T
show, hopes to ret
weekend performe
Full Article

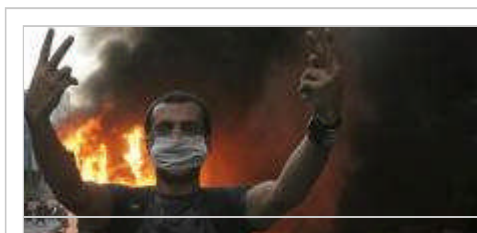
WE WANT TO HI

Join the Reuters
Insight Panel an
know you better

Please take a r
complete our s

© Thomson Reuters 2009 All rights reserved

SHARE: [Del.icio.us](#) [Digg](#) [Mixx](#) [Yahoo!](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#)



IRAN'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Aftermath of Iran's election

Supporters of President Ahmadinejad celebrate his re-election, while supporters of Mousavi hold rallies to protest his defeat. [Slideshow](#) | [Full Article](#)

MORE TOP NEWS

[Protesters plan more mass rallies in Iran](#) | [Video](#)

[U.S. financial regulation reforms outlined](#) | [Video](#)
[Obama lobbies U.S. doctors on healthcare reforms](#) | [Video](#)
[Russia hosts first BRIC summit, India-Pakistan meet](#)
[BoFA's BlackRock stake grows more appealing](#)
[More Top News...](#)

Ads by Google [What's This?](#)

[Low Cost Health Plans](#)
Compare Quotes from Top Providers Apply Online and Save
[QuoteRunner.com](#)

[Is Your Bank In Trouble?](#)
Free list Of Banks Doomed To Fail. The Banks and Brokers X List. Free!
[www.MoneyAndMarkets.com](#)

[Health Insurance](#)
Let us help fill the gaps in your Medicare coverage.
[www.getmednow.com](#)

[Carolina Health Quotes](#)
Get Instant Health Quotes Online! Be Amazed by How Much You Can Save.
[www.GoHealthInsurance.com](#)

Reuters.com: [Help and Contact Us](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Mobile](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [RSS](#)  | [Labs](#) | [Archive](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Video Index](#)

Thomson Reuters Corporate: [Copyright](#) | [Disclaimer](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Professional Products](#) | [Professional Products Support](#) | [About Thomson Reuters](#) | [Contact Us](#)

International Editions: [Africa](#) | [Arabic](#) | [Argentina](#) | [Brazil](#) | [Canada](#) | [China](#) | [France](#) | [Germany](#) | [India](#) | [Italy](#) | [Japan](#) | [Latin America](#) | [Mexico](#) | [United States](#)

Thomson Reuters is the world's largest international multimedia news agency, providing investing news, world news, business news, technology news, headline news, small business news, stock market, and mutual funds information available on Reuters.com, video, mobile, and interactive television platforms. Thomson Reuters journalists are subject to an Editor's Code of Ethics and disclosure of relevant interests.

NYSE and AMEX quotes delayed by at least 20 minutes. Nasdaq delayed by at least 15 minutes. For a complete list of exchanges and delays, please [click here](#).