

Over 85 GOP Lawmakers Call For APTC Extension After Johnson Delays WH Plan

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(Inside Health Policy)

Just one day after the White House pulled back on a proposal to temporarily extend the expiring Affordable Care Act subsidies, reportedly due to House Speaker Mike Johnson's objections, more than 85 GOP House members praised the president's effort to address the "cliff" and pledged to work with the administration, congressional leadership and the committees of jurisdiction to get a fix passed by the end of the year.

The Federation of American Hospitals (FAH) also applauded the White House for floating a solution that would maintain the credits.

The White House was reportedly set to announce a plan that calls for an extension of the subsidies for two years, limiting the subsidies to enrollees up to 700% of the federal poverty level (FPL), implementing a minimum premium for enrollees and allowing enrollees on bronze-level plans to contribute some of their subsidy to a health savings account (HSA). The proposal would appropriate cost-sharing reductions (CSRs) as a payfor.

According to *Wall Street Journal* reporting Tuesday (Nov. 25), the White House balked after Johnson (R-LA) warned that House Republicans do not support extending the subsidies. Republicans have consistently pointed out that they've never voted in favor of the ACA or any of its subsidies, including the enhanced credits established by the American Rescue Plan and extended under the Inflation Reduction Act.

Johnson has also yet to guarantee a vote on an ACA subsidy extension in the House, despite Senate Republicans promising Democrats in their chamber a vote in mid-December as part of a deal to reopen the government earlier this month.

Despite Johnson's claim about his caucus' lack of support for the subsidies, the Main Street Caucus, a group of 86 GOP House members "who are dedicated to strong, conservative principles," released a statement Tuesday (Nov. 25) praising the White House.

"Main Street supports President Trump's ongoing efforts to address the ACA tax credit cliff with an extension," the caucus, led by Rep. Mike Flood (R-NE), said. "Any effort to address this cliff needs to include income caps and make serious reforms to the credits, including addressing the rampant fraud and abuse in the program. Our caucus is committed to working with President Trump, our House leadership, and the committees of jurisdiction to find a solution that can pass Congress before the end of the year."

FAH also urged the White House to move forward. The hospital lobby said the White House's potential plan "is an encouraging step in the right direction" and that "this is exactly the kind of leadership needed as we approach the expiration of health care tax credits for over 20 million Americans."

"Now is the time for lawmakers who care about health care affordability - Democrats and Republicans alike - to work together on a solution that extends the tax credits to protect millions of Americans from skyrocketing health premiums and coverage losses come January 1st," FAH Executive Vice President of Public Affairs Charlene MacDonald said in a release Tuesday.

While a spokesperson for the Main Street Caucus told *Inside Health Policy* the caucus is not endorsing a specific plan or piece of legislation, there is a bipartisan House bill sponsored by caucus member Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE) that would extend the subsidies. The bill is also sponsored by Reps. Tom Suozzi (D-NY), Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ) and Jeff Hurd (R-CA), members of the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus, which Bacon is also a member of. The legislation would extend the subsidies for two years and phase out the subsidies for those who make between 600% FPL and 935% FPL, as well as implement anti-fraud reforms.

The bill also would extend open enrollment to March 15.