

Speaker Johnson Warns White House GOP Is Wary of Trump's Healthcare Push

Top House Republican says most House Republicans don't have appetite for extending expiring ACA subsidies

By Olivia Beavers, Natalie Andrews

The Wall Street Journal

Updated Nov. 25, 2025 8:02 am ET

WASHINGTON—Speaker Mike Johnson (R., La.) cautioned the White House that most House Republicans don't have an appetite for extending enhanced Affordable Care Act subsidies, according to people familiar with the matter, showing how hard it will be politically to stave off sharp increases in healthcare costs next year for many Americans.

The message from Johnson, in a phone call with administration officials, came as President Trump's advisers were drafting a healthcare plan that extended the subsidies for two years.

The warning underscores the hurdles facing any deal in coming weeks. Lawmakers have a mid-December deadline for healthcare votes promised as a condition for Democrats voting to end the government shutdown earlier this month. The enhanced subsidies expire at the end of the year, affecting more than 20 million people who benefit from the tax credits.

Many Republicans objected to the taxpayer-funded subsidies continuing to go toward funding healthcare plans that cover abortions, a red line for many GOP lawmakers, said people familiar with the objections.

The emerging White House plan would extend the subsidies temporarily, while imposing income caps for ACA enrollees to qualify, as well as measures to crack down on healthcare fraud, according to people familiar with the matter. Several Republicans want to pair the subsidy wind-down with the creation of health savings accounts, an approach Trump has praised.

Potential details of the Trump plan were reported by media outlets Sunday night and Monday morning before rank-and-file Republicans were briefed. The reports in MS NOW and Politico prompted a flurry of activity by lawmakers and healthcare lobbyists.

White House officials said the proposal hasn't been finalized and didn't have Trump's final signoff. Johnson has previously indicated extending the enhanced ACA subsidies would be a tough sell in the House. "What we have said is, if there was going to be an extension of that, it would need massive reforms," including income caps and other changes, he said on Fox News earlier this month.

Extending the subsidies for two years could win backing from centrist Democrats, who have been lobbying for a compromise that avoids a big price spike for households. Some cheered the news reports about Trump's plans.

"If the reports are true and the president is considering coming to the table in good faith, I believe we can find a path forward that can earn broad bipartisan support in Congress," said Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D., N.H.).

Trump and White House officials didn't roll out a plan on Monday. It is unclear what Trump and Republicans will do to address the soon-to-expire enhanced ACA subsidies. Without those subsidies, many enrollees will see their [monthly payments jump](#) and could decide to drop coverage altogether.

Johnson has steered Trump's agenda through the House in the first year of Trump's second term in a historically small majority. He successfully shepherded into law Trump's "big beautiful" tax bill that accomplished many of Trump's campaign promises, and kept his party together during the government shutdown, despite complaints about his decision to keep the House out of session for more than a month.

Now, Johnson must balance the cries from Republicans in competitive districts who are demanding an extension of the subsidies against many members' deeply held opposition to the subsidies paid under the ACA, known as Obamacare. The ACA passed with only Democratic votes in 2010, while a Republican-only effort to repeal it failed in 2017. The enhanced ACA subsidies were first passed by Democrats in 2021.

Some GOP lawmakers predicted only a fraction of House Republicans—from a dozen to a couple dozen—would back a bill extending subsidies, with other concerns including abortion coverage weighing on support. Putting tighter abortion restrictions on the subsidies would likely mean losing Democratic votes, and both parties would be needed to pass healthcare legislation quickly, due to Senate rules requiring 60 votes to advance most legislation.

Subsidies can currently be used to pay for a plan that includes abortion coverage, but the enrollees have to pay a small amount out of their own pockets for the specific cost of the abortion coverage, so that federal money isn't used for that.

Republicans could seek to attach a healthcare measure to a must-pass funding measure if they fail to pass a stand-alone healthcare package. Should that fail, some Republicans want Trump to use a process known as budget reconciliation that only needs a simple majority in the Senate, rather than 60 votes.

Democrats are eager to take on the healthcare fight ahead of the midterm elections next year, as polls frequently show that voters trust them on the issue. Senate Democrats repeatedly blocked a stopgap government spending bill, leading to the government

shutdown, over demands that Republicans join them in extending the enhanced subsidies.

To end the shutdown, Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R., S.D.) promised to hold a vote on extending the subsidies, but Johnson didn't.