Moreno makes final health care offer to Democrats

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- Sen. Bernie Moreno, R-Ohio, proposed a one-year extension of expired health care subsidies with a gradual wind-down and an option to use Health Savings Accounts after 2026.

Sen. Bernie Moreno, R-Ohio, made his final pitch to Senate Democrats on a plan to revive expired health care subsidies on Wednesday, according to a copy of the legislation obtained by Semafor.

The Ohio Republican is pitching a one-year straight extension of the enhanced premium tax credits that expired at the end of last year. Under the proposal, the subsidies would then wind down over 2027 and 2028 with an option to use Health

Savings Accounts after 2026. The bill would also bar “individuals not lawfully present” in the US from receiving benefits under the bill.

Asked for comment, Philip Letsou, Moreno’s chief of staff, said that “Senate Democrats have a choice: they can come to the table, fix a problem they created, and accept easy fixes like commonsense bans on public benefits for illegal immigrants or they can walk away. It’s time to find out if they want a political issue they can leak to the media or an actual solution.”

The proposal also includes a minimum $5 monthly payment on subsidized plans; extends open enrollment until March 31; imposes penalties on fraud; requires audits of states’ compliance with the Hyde amendment barring taxpayer funding on abortions; includes cost-sharing reduction payments; and caps the subsidies at 700% of the federal poverty level.

Moreno made clear on Wednesday that his offer does not represent the Senate GOP’s position but rather the “maximum” that his party could support. He said if Democrats say “this is impossible, there’s no way we can sell that,” then “it’s over.”
He emphasized that the legislative proposal responds to Republican concerns about fraud by preventing people in the country illegally from getting benefits and placing an income cap on the benefits and said if they don’t like it “the Democrats have just got to tell us: ‘Hey look, I can’t sell that.’”

“I still think we have to solve this problem. It’s now going to be in the hands of the Democrats, ” Moreno told reporters. “We haven’t sold this to our conference yet. What I am presenting to them today is the best case scenario of what they would accept.”