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Please respect 72 Hour request of eight Senate Democrats

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Dear Senator:

Please respect the 72 hour request by your colleagues to read the healthcare bill and Congressional Budget Office (CBO) analysis—which would mean no vote before 11 pm on Saturday, November 21.

As you probably know, on October 6, 2009, eight members of the United States Senate—Senators Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.), Evan Bayh (D-Ind.), Mary Landrieu (D-La.), Joseph Lieberman (I-Conn.), Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), Ben Nelson (D-Neb.), Mark Pryor (D-Ark.) and Jim Webb (D-Va.)—sent a letter to Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) calling for more transparency and public participation in the healthcare reform process. To ensure that they and the American people will have an opportunity to read and analyze the legislation, the Senators requested that no vote come before the Senate until 72 hours after Senator Reid has released both his bill and its full score from the CBO.

In part, the letter reads:

By publicly posting the legislation and its CBO scores 72 hours before it is brought to a vote in the Senate and by publishing the text of amendments before they are debated, our constituents will have the opportunity to evaluate these policies and communicate their concerns or their message of support to their Members of Congress. As their democratically-elected representatives in Washington, D.C., it is our duty to listen to their concerns and to provide them with the chance to respond to proposals that will impact their lives. At a time when trust in Congress and the U.S. government is unprecedentedly low, we can begin to rebuild the American people's faith in their federal government through transparency and by actively inviting Americans to participate in the legislative process.

This plea is more than reasonable, especially when considering that Senator Reid's bill is a staggering 2,074 pages. In order to read it in 72 hours, one would have to read 28 pages an hour for 3 days straight with no breaks and no sleep. And that doesn't include reading the CBO cost analysis. Still, providing the public—and members of the Senate—with the chance to read the legislation before ramming it through will help to ensure that the American people are not completely left out of the process.

On behalf of hundreds of thousands of FreedomWorks members, I urge you to allow the American people the opportunity to read and understand the legislation that will so greatly impact their lives. If you do not, we will make sure to let your constituents know that you rushed through another trillion dollar bill—like the Wall Street bailout and the stimulus bill—without giving them a chance to see what was in it. Make no mistake about it, when they go to the voting booth, they WILL hold you accountable.

Sincerely,

Matt Kibbe
President and CEO
FreedomWorks.org