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OBAMA TO CONGRESS: SCHEDULE VOTE ON HEALTH REFORMS

Following last week's health care summit, President Obama and Congressional Democrats made clear their intention to pass health care legislation using a controversial procedure called reconciliation. By using this process Democrats in the Senate only need 51 votes, instead of 60, to pass health care reform.

Reconciliation is a legislative procedure that limits debate and voting time to 20 hours and also requires that amendments be "germane" (on topic) to the bill. Generally, an issue cannot be included in a reconciliation bill that does not affect one of three areas: taxes, spending or debt. If Congress moves forward using this procedure, the House would first have to pass the Senate's health care bill unchanged. Once the House passes the Senate's bill, Congress would use a reconciliation bill to work out the numerous differences between their two proposals. Ultimately, by using reconciliation, the Senate only needs 51 votes to pass the remaining "fixes" for health care reform.

With all the special stipulations that surround using reconciliation, it is usually thought of as a last resort and not used on a regular basis. However, since the Senate Democrats lost their supermajority following the election of Scott Brown in Massachusetts, reconciliation has rapidly become the only option for a health care reform bill this year.

Given the likelihood that votes on health care reform legislation could come in as little as two weeks, it is critical that you contact your members of Congress and tell them how the health care reforms will affect you. Time is running out to influence the health care reform debate – ACT NOW by [clicking here!](#)

For more information on the details of the health care reform bills, [click here](#).

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