

How your lawmakers voted

Here's how local members of Congress voted on major issues in the week ending Friday. NV means "did not vote."

HOUSE

DEMOCRATS' HEALTH BILL

Voting 220-215, the House on Nov. 7 passed HR 3962, a bill that would provide affordable medical coverage to about 36 million uninsured U.S. residents while overhauling insurance industry practices in ways that benefit the sick, the well, the uninsured and the insured. The bill, which awaits Senate action, would extend coverage to about 96 percent of the nonelderly population by 2019 while not adding to the national debt.

The bill expands Medicaid to cover an additional 15 million people, requires employers with payrolls above \$500,000 to provide insurance for their workers and establishes an exchange for delivering coverage to individuals who do not receive insurance at work or through Medicaid or Medicare. The exchange, or marketplace, would offer private policies alongside a government-run "public option" and would provide subsidies to help low- and middle-income individuals meet premium costs. The public option, a Medicare-style plan in which the government would negotiate rates with doctors and hospitals, would serve an estimated 6 million people.

Roughly half of the bill's projected cost of \$900 billion or more over 10 years would be financed through measures that slow the growth rate of Medicare. Additionally, the bill would raise about \$460 billion through a 5.4 percent surtax on individuals with adjusted gross incomes above \$500,000 and couples earning more than \$1 million. Surtaxes are figured on taxes owed, not adjusted gross incomes. The bill also would levy a 2.5 percent excise tax on medical devices, among other revenue-raisers.

Rep. G.K. Butterfield, D-N.C., said: "We have an obligation, constitutional and moral, to provide for the general welfare of every American citizen. Allowing a broken health care system to continue to bankrupt families, businesses and hospitals and deny coverage to millions is a failure of duty."

Rep. George Radanovich, R-Calif., said: "In less than a year, the Obama administration, working with the Pelosi Congress, has recklessly spent taxpayer funds to expand government to a level never before seen in history. ...

And now we are going to vote on whether the government should take over the nation's health care system. ..."

A "yes" vote was to pass the bill.

	Yes	No	NV
Brian Bilbray R	£	¢	£
Susan Davis D	¢	£	£
Bob Filner D	¢	£	£
Duncan Hunter R	£	¢	£
Darrell Issa R	£	¢	£

REPUBLICANS' HEALTH BILL

Voting 258-176, the House on Nov. 7 defeated a Republican alternative to HR 3962 (above) that would grant states tens of billions of dollars over 10 years as an incentive for them to expand health-insurance coverage and reduce insurance premiums for their residents. The GOP bill also would pay states up to \$25 billion over 10 years to finance pools for insuring high-risk individuals and reinsurance programs to help private insurers cover catastrophic costs

and thus lower their premium levels. The bill would cover up to 5 million of the uninsured.

In contrast to the Democrats' approach, the GOP measure would not require individuals to obtain insurance or employers to offer it and would allow insurance companies to continue to deny coverage or charge higher premiums on the basis of pre-existing conditions. In other differences, the Republican bill would not raise taxes, expand Medicaid, provide premium subsidies to low- and middle-income people or require Medicare to negotiate lower costs for prescription drugs.

Additionally, the GOP bill would enable small businesses to join together to form "association" health plans that would operate across state lines with minimal government regulation; limit medical-malpractice awards; enable insurance companies to sell policies in any number of states while being strictly regulated only by their home state; and bar insurers from canceling policies after the policy holder gets sick or limiting lifetime payouts on claims.

A "yes" vote backed the GOP alternative.

	Yes	No	NV
Brian Bilbray R	¢	£	£
Susan Davis D	£	¢	£
Bob Filner D	£	¢	£
Duncan Hunter R	¢	£	£
Darrell Issa R	¢	£	£

DISPUTE OVER ABORTION

Voting 240-194, the House on Nov. 7 amended HR 3962 (above) to prohibit the bill's public option from funding abortions and bar those with premiums subsidized by taxpayers from buying private policies that contain abortion coverage. The amendment went beyond "Hyde Amendment" language already in the bill that would bar federal funding of abortions except in cases of rape or incest or to save the life of the mother.

The amendment was backed by anti-abortion groups such as the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and opposed by abortion rights groups such as Planned Parenthood International.

A "yes" vote was to adopt the amendment.

	Yes	No	NV
Brian Bilbray R	¢	£	£
Susan Davis D	£	¢	£
Bob Filner D	£	¢	£
Duncan Hunter R	¢	£	£
Darrell Issa R	¢	£	£

MEDICAL-MALPRACTICE SUITS

Voting 247-187, the House on Nov. 7 defeated a Republican motion to add limits on medical-malpractice lawsuits to HR 3962 (above). The underlying bill would fund state efforts to reduce the cost of the "defensive medicine" practiced by doctors to fend off lawsuits. Republicans sought to cap noneconomic damage awards at \$250,000, limit plaintiffs' lawyers' contingency fees and narrow the window for filing malpractice suits, among other provisions. The GOP motion sought to generate \$54 billion to be spent for the benefit of Medicare participants in rural areas.

A "yes" vote backed the Republican motion.

	Yes	No	NV
Brian Bilbray R	¢	£	£
Susan Davis D	£	¢	£
Bob Filner D	£	¢	£
Duncan Hunter R	¢	£	£
Darrell Issa R	¢	£	£