



# *Health Care Weekly Preview*

*Week of September 18<sup>th</sup>*

Welcome back everybody. The House is out this week and the Senate is out Thursday and Friday with a lot to sort out before they skip town. Graham-Cassidy has people on edge because, if nothing else, it is still alive. The prognosis for Graham-Cassidy remains challenging. The Congressional Budget Office still needs to score the bill and the bill will have to undergo the Byrd Bath. Senator John McCain (AZ) voiced support for the bipartisan committee work ongoing in the Senate HELP Committee this weekend, becoming the latest Senator to throw cold water on the Graham-Cassidy effort. Senators Susan Collins (ME) and Lisa Murkowski (AK) also remain key hold outs, and both sit on the Senate HELP Committee. The timing of the Alexander-Murray HELP stabilization package and the CBO score are critical moving forward.

There are twelve days to go before the reconciliation instructions expire in the Senate, and Republicans appear more open to another run at repeal, if for no other reason than not wanting to tell Graham-Cassidy “NO!” The next forty-eight hours should offer some insight into the plausibility of the bill moving forward, as the Republican caucus will meet tomorrow to gauge support. Will there be enough Republicans ready to stop Graham-Cassidy now or will they wait to see numbers, driving this conversation into next week?

The Democratic push last week for Medicare-for-All distracted from the threat of Graham-Cassidy. Now they will quickly pivot back to mobilizing against Graham-Cassidy. One wildcard that could complicate matters: what if Alexander and Murray reach an agreement in the HELP Committee on a short-term stabilization package?

## **THIS WEEK IN THE HOUSE**

The House is not in session this week.

## **THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE**

On Wednesday (9/20), the Senate Special Committee on Aging will hold a hearing titled, “Disaster Preparedness and Response: The Special Needs of Older Americans.” For more information on the hearing, click [here](#).

## **THE OTHER RECONCILIATION**

There’s been a lot of reporting on the discord between Senators Lamar Alexander (TN) and Orrin Hatch (UT), who chair HELP and Finance, respectively. Hatch has remained opposed to the stabilization package being produced in the HELP Committee, and has grown openly upset with the process in recent weeks, including a scathing [op-ed in the Washington Post](#). There’s no question that Finance needs to be involved in the process going forward, as key issues being raised in HELP also fall under the jurisdiction of Finance.

Section 1332 waivers and waiver flexibility have been key issues being raised by Republicans and Democrats, who would like to see more flexibility given to states. Democrats are adamant on maintaining the guardrails, but it remains an open question if Democrats would be willing to cut a deal if it means cost-sharing reduction subsidies get funded. The reality is Alexander and Hatch need to find some level of cooperation to move a stabilization package in a timely fashion.

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