



Talking Points

The real story about the new health care reform law: Sharing positive information

Make sure you are heard – focus on your audience

Choose the best message:

Messages must resonate with the audience and speak to what is important to them. In your outreach, think about what motivates or concerns your audience, and tailor your message to meet your goals. Whether you want to inform, educate or get people involved, select the right message and tone that will work.

Choose the best messenger:

Find the right spokesperson to deliver the right message. Reach out within your networks to faith leaders, small business owners, seniors, families with children who have special health care needs, and providers to talk to their audiences. The messages they deliver should reflect the special perspectives they bring to the issue of health care reform.

Make it personal:

The best counter to any argument against the new law is a real story of someone who needs these reforms. They work with any audience. If the person cannot join you or present her/his story, refer to her/his situation and need.

Be ready to combat misinformation:

Have the facts at your fingertips: who will be helped by reform, what is and isn't in the bill, etc. Remind people what reform will mean for his/her community. For example:

- XXX people in [STATE/DISTRICT] are uninsured.
- XXX families in [STATE/DISTRICT] have children with special needs who need health care reform.
- XXX seniors in [STATE/DISTRICT] fall in the Medicare Part D doughnut hole and will get help making their prescriptions more affordable.
- XXX small business owners in [STATE/DISTRICT] will get tax credits to help them afford insurance and meet their bottom lines.

What the new law does:

- The new health care reform law gives Americans more control over their health insurance and their health care by holding insurance companies more accountable.
- The new law makes sure preventive services – such as screening tests – are covered without co-payments.
- The new law ensures that health care decisions are made between people and their doctors.
- The new law will end bad insurance company practices, allow individuals and small businesses to buy the same insurance as Congress, and bring down costs.
- The health care reform law will make health insurance more affordable for small businesses and individuals, covering 32 million people who cannot afford health insurance today.

Answer to ‘this was rammed down the throat’ of Americans only if you must – we encourage you respond only as necessary and then immediately pivot back to the positive provisions in the law by saying, “It is important to focus on what the law does to help American families, seniors and businesses such as ...” (see various message options below)

- This law was passed by majority votes in the House and Senate – that’s democracy.
- That’s how No Child Left Behind, the original State Children’s Health Insurance Program, two wars and the largest tax cuts in history were all passed. These all passed Congress with only a simple majority.
- Congress discussed health care reform for over a year, held countless committee hearings, debated and voted in the House and Senate, and discussed the issues for more than seven hours before the American public at the president’s bipartisan summit. The final law includes Republican and Democratic ideas and amendments.

General messages for the public

- The new law gives families peace of mind because it guarantees that their insurance will not be taken away, even if they lose a job or their health status changes.
- In the past year, our government provided access to health care for four million more American children, expanded care provided by rural community health centers, and guaranteed that people who lose a job and health insurance can keep affordable COBRA coverage. This law builds on these successes.

- Small businesses are the key to economic growth and recovery, but rising health care costs hamper entrepreneurial efforts. The new law provides tax credits to small business owners to finally make insurance affordable, which will encourage business development and growth.
- Runaway health care costs have been bankrupting our families, our businesses and our country. We needed this law to reform our health care system now so that it works for all Americans.
- The new health care reform law will crack down on insurers who deny people care when they have pre-existing conditions or drop people when they are sick. It will improve care for children with special health care needs, strengthen Medicare and help seniors struggling to pay for their medications.
- America's hospitals and doctors are the best in the world, but our health care system left many families physically and financially unhealthy. The new law means that health care will no longer cost too much, medical debt won't bankrupt hardworking families, and people will no longer be denied insurance.
- Our nation's spending on health care was skyrocketing year after year. The new law will curb health care costs overall and will end extreme premium and co-pay hikes.

Progressives

- This law changes the game: We will have a health care system that works for the American people, not special interests.
- Though the final law may not be everything we hoped for, it will improve the lives of millions of families today and provide a strong base on which to build in the future.
- Great social initiatives, including Social Security and Medicare, were not perfect when they passed, but they are popular programs today that provide crucial support in our society. Without Medicare, 40 million seniors would lack insurance. This new law will give 32 million more Americans access to health insurance.
- The comprehensive health care reform law was a moral victory that generations of Americans will celebrate. Now we need to turn our attention to making sure it is implemented properly and will not suffer from partisan attacks by opponents focused on advancing their political agenda.

Fiscally conservative

- Runaway health care costs were bankrupting our families, our businesses and our government. The new health care reform law will control skyrocketing annual health care cost increases, which is essential to fixing our national economy.

- For years, health care costs took too much from families' budgets and from businesses' bottom lines. This law will help small businesses flourish so employees will see a rise in wages, businesses will expand and our economy will recover.
- This law will finally make insurance affordable, so small business owners can insure their families and their employees. Small businesses are the key to economic growth and recovery, and this law means health care costs will no longer hamper innovation and entrepreneurial efforts.
- This law will bring short- and long-term gains to our families and our businesses that will rein in insurance companies, cover everyone and control costs.

Moderates

- Americans now have a comprehensive health care reform law that will provide health security and peace of mind. Now families are free from anxiety about the stability of their health care plans and escalating health care costs.
- The new law means that Americans have peace of mind knowing they won't lose their health insurance if they lose their jobs. They now know they can always go to the doctor, receive the quality care they need when they need it, and afford the final bill.
- The new law will make a difference in the lives of children and adults with pre-existing conditions who will no longer be denied coverage; seniors who will no longer have to struggle to pay for their medications; and small business owners who will be able to afford to insure themselves and their employees.
- Millions of Americans who could not get it before are now guaranteed access to good health insurance that is affordable for them and their families.

Response to legal challenges to the law, or efforts to repeal it

- The new law is made of strong and interconnecting pieces. Together the provisions will help people with pre-existing conditions, children with special health care needs, seniors struggling to pay for their medications, and small business owners. The law stabilizes families' finances, reduces the risk of medical debt and provides peace of mind to Americans across the country.
- We should not settle for less. Americans deserve a health care system that works for them.
- Opponents' attacks saying the new law is unconstitutional lack legal merit and are driven by a political agenda.
- Throughout the past year, people who oppose reform have voiced their dissent. However, the majority of Members of Congress voted for passage, and President Obama signed

health care reform into law. Also, most Americans support the provisions in the law when given an accurate summary. Although political discourse is an important part of our democratic system, political opposition masquerading as legal challenges is counterproductive.

- The majority of legal experts, including conservatives, agree the national health care reform law is constitutional, supported by almost 70 years of court cases. Arguments regarding the federal government's authority to require all individuals to obtain insurance coverage or to exercise authority over states have been resolved in the federal government's favor time and again. The courts have ruled repeatedly that the federal government has the power to establish programs to help people.
- Many of the people bringing legal challenges have political agendas. A high-profile challenge gives these politicians a platform to cultivate political support, including media coverage. We need to take a close look at the motivations behind the attacks.
- Legal challenges to health care reform will cost taxpayers money. Both legislative challenges and lawsuits will be resolved in the courtroom at taxpayers' expense. With no legal merit to the arguments against national reform, why waste taxpayer dollars to further an anti-reform agenda? With constraints on state budgets and resources, this is not a wise use of taxpayer dollars.
- Slowing the implementation of health care reform through legal actions has a human cost. The legal actions may delay the benefits of health care reform for children with pre-existing conditions, seniors and young adults. They will delay free preventive care, the expansion of community health centers, and the end to insurance companies' harmful practices. The legal challenges will hurt people who need access to health care or lower costs for those who already have insurance.