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Health Reform: Finding a Way Forward

Using Reconciliation to Enact Reform Would Be Consistent With Past Practice

Democratic Congressional leaders must soon decide whether to use reconciliation — a process that allows for expedited consideration of legislation affecting mandatory spending programs or taxes — to help pass health reform legislation.

Some critics have charged that using reconciliation to enact a major change in policy, such as health reform, would be unprecedented and would represent a gross, highly partisan misuse of the process. A review of the past use of reconciliation demonstrates, however, that this charge is incorrect. Both parties have used reconciliation for many major policy changes, including welfare reform in 1996, large tax cuts in 2001 and 2003, and new health programs over the last twenty years. [Read more](#)



Major Insurance Market Reforms Will Only Work as Part of Broader Health Reform

Some policymakers have suggested that Congress enact a scaled-back bill that focuses primarily on popular health insurance market reforms. This approach will not work.

Health insurance market reforms will work properly only as part of broader health reform legislation that includes, among other things, a requirement for individuals to have insurance and provisions to make insurance affordable for people of modest means. [Read more](#)

Changes to Excise Tax Address Criticisms, Retain Long-Term Benefits

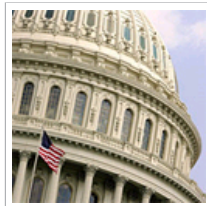
The recent agreement that the administration and labor leaders negotiated on the Senate bill's excise tax on high-cost plans fixes its flaws and maintains its expected effectiveness in helping to slow health-care cost growth over time. [Read more](#)

More: Health Reform Analyses

Issues Facing Congress

Greenstein Statement on "PAYGO" Proposal

"PAYGO will not close the daunting budget gaps that we face; policymakers will have to take additional steps. Still, it's an important first step. The nation's fiscal situation would be far healthier had policymakers adhered to such policies over the past decade. Supporters of the PAYGO proposal should be commended for pursuing this action." [Read more](#)



Extending the TANF Emergency Fund Would Create and Preserve Jobs Quickly and Efficiently

"Unless states know soon that additional aid will be available for fiscal year 2011 under the TANF Emergency Fund [created by the Recovery Act]...many states will feel compelled to institute harsh cutbacks in cash assistance for very poor families with children even though need is continuing to rise. The result will be a further loss of jobs, a withdrawal of needed stimulus, and an increase in serious hardship...among some of the nation's poorest children and families." [Read More](#)

More: Economic Recovery Watch Analyses

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Statement: Nicholas Johnson, State Fiscal Project Director, on the Passage of Revenue Measures in Oregon

January 27, 2010

Podcast: The Long-Term Budget Outlook

January 26, 2010

Vast Majority of Large New Mexico Corporations are Already Subject to "Combined Reporting" in Other States

January 26, 2010

Sharp Expansion of HUD's "Moving-To-Work" Demonstration Raises Serious Concerns

January 22, 2010

Podcast: Food Insecurity

January 19, 2010

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Center in the News

Massachusetts Counts on Obama in \$28.2 Billion Budget

Bloomberg News
January 27, 2010

In the Blogs: [Reconciliation: It's Cool Tapped](#), an American Prospect Blog
January 27, 2010

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2010 Tax Credit Outreach Kit

In the Blogs: **CBPP: Circumvent Filibuster To Pass Worthwhile Health Care Changes**
TPMDC, a Talking Points Memo Blog
January 27, 2010

In the Blogs: **Battling Tomorrow's Misinformation Today**
The Treatment, a New Republic Blog
January 27, 2010

GREENSTEIN: Setting a Target for Fiscal Responsibility
Washington Times

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