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Schumer urges McConnell to put bipartisan health care bill 'on the floor immediately'

BY ERIN DURKIN

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

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(JIM LO SCALZO/EPA)

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Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer urged a quick vote on a bipartisan health care bill he said has the support of every Senate Democrat, but Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said he'll bring it to the floor only if he's confident President Trump will sign it.

"I would urge Sen. McConnell to put it on the floor immediately this week. It will pass, and it will pass by a large number of votes," Schumer said Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press."

The bill is supported by "all 48 Democrats" as well as 12 Republicans, enough for a 60-vote majority, Schumer said.

The legislation was negotiated in a deal between Tennessee Republican Lamar Alexander and Washington Democrat Patty Murray. It is a short-term fix rather than a sweeping overhaul of the health care system, and would fund subsidies to insurance companies that Trump announced plans to end. Without those subsidies, insurers have said that premiums would soar.

Trump has sent mixed signals on the deal, at one point saying he opposed it as a bailout to insurance companies but also calling it a "good start" he was open to supporting.

McConnell said he'll bring the legislation up for a vote only with Trump's clear support.

"What I'm waiting is to hear from President Trump what kind of health care deal he might sign," he said on CNN's "State of the Union."



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(JOSHUA ROBERTS/REUTERS)

"We need a bill the President will actually sign. I'm not certain yet what the President is looking for here, but I'll be happy to bring a bill to the floor if I know President Trump would sign it."

Schumer said his Republican counterpart should call a vote immediately.

"This is a good compromise," he told NBC. "Let's not forget, what this bill does is prevent premiums from going up 20%, even more in some states. That falls on everybody's back. And if Republicans think that if premiums go up they're going to avoid the blame, if Sen. McConnell thinks that, he's wrong."

He said Democrats were not interested in re-negotiating the deal to gain more GOP support. "We are sticking to the agreement we have," he said.

Schumer hit Trump for his waffling on the agreement.

"The right wing attacks it, and he backs off," he said. "That's the whole problem. The President is not leading on issue after issue after issue."