

Americans shall give a thumbs down on health care

After days of shutting out the conservative voice from the discussion, last Thursday, Speaker Pelosi's 1,990 page, trillion dollar health care overhaul bill was introduced. Many members, including myself, used some of the weekend to read through it, as it's expected we'll be voting on it as soon as Friday.

I was appreciative of the many of you who shared your thoughts on the bill with me at my two town hall meetings this past weekend. I think Sunday's Milwaukee Journal Sentinel headline summed up your comments nicely: "Health Reform Bill Gets Thumbs Down in Elm Grove."

You've already heard a great deal about the bill's economic consequences - President Obama has his own "fuzzy numbers" when he promises that the legislation won't add a dime to the deficit. I think most of the Fifth District would agree that it's hard to hear about a program costing more than a trillion dollars and being deficit neutral. Only in Washington is that considered "cost savings."



F. JAMES
SENSENBRENNER

And one quick review of the government's Cash for Clunkers program costing an estimated \$24,000 for each car or the actual number of jobs created by the stimulus package tells us that the government doesn't make for the best and most cost efficient program manager.

But what you really need to hear is how Wisconsinites will pay in the consequences of this legislation and the sacrifices they will need to make as a patient.

This plan puts the government and politicians in charge of your health care. It allows the government access to your private medical records, places more controls on the doctor-patient relationship, and the added red tape from the government takeover, offers too much risk for delayed and denied care. If your cable goes out for 72-hours, it's unfortunate, but you can wait. When you need medical treatment, you can't wait.

Conservatives want to protect patients, protect the doctor-patient relationship and ensure you get care when you need it - without delay. And they want to ensure that it's you who decides who has the right to know your medical information, not the government.

I believe the right way to improve health care is to prioritize spending and be careful with taxpayer dollars. The wrong way is to raise taxes even higher and dig our debt even deeper to pay for more wasteful programs that don't work. In my opinion, before the government raises your taxes to pay for yet

another program that will likely make Cash for Clunkers look like a Black Friday door buster item, they owe it to you to cut out their waste, fraud and abuse.

Leaders who say Medicare isn't running well because of all its waste, and then also make Medicare the model for the government takeover, should not be managing our health-care. Speaker Pelosi and her team of Democrats know it's bad legislation - that's why on page 225 of the bill, section 330 permits, but does not require, members of Congress to enroll in government-run health care. Members may do what they like, but for the rest of the American population, the bill uses the word "shall" 3,425 times.

One size does not fit all. You and your physician should be in charge of your health care decisions, not politicians. In my opinion, the American public shall give the politicians a thumbs down.

(U.S. Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner, R-Wis., represents the 5th District.)