Health care jousting gets ugly

Democrats split in Senate: Moderates don't want public option; liberals might not bend

By ANNE FLAHERTY
The Associated Press
WASHINGTON — Moderate Senate Democrats threatened Saturday to scuttle health-care legislation if their demands aren't met, while more liberal members warned their party leaders not to bend.

The dispute among Democrats foreshadows a rowdy floor debate next month on legislation that would extend health care coverage to roughly 31 million Americans. Republicans already have made clear they aren't supporting the bill.

Final passage is in jeopardy, even after the chamber's 60-39 vote Saturday night to begin debate.

"I don't want a big-government, Washington-run operation that would undermine the ... private insurance that 200 million Americans now have," said Sen. Ben Nelson, a conservative Nebraska Democrat.

Nelson and three other moderate senators — Mary Landrieu of Louisiana, Ben Nelson of Nebraska and Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas and Connecticut independent Joe Lieberman — agreed to open debate despite expressing reservations on the measure. Each of them has warned that they might not support the final bill.

One major sticking point is a provision that would allow Americans to buy a federal-run insurance plan if their state allows it. Moderates say they worry the "public option" will become a huge and costly entitlement program and that other requirements in the bill could cripple businesses.

"I don't want to fix the problems in our health care system in a way that creates more of an economic crisis," Lieberman said.

The sway held by such a small group of senators has annoyed their more liberal colleagues, who could vote against a final bill if it contains the provision.

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A HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE

More Jesse Boyd students choosing milk mustaches

By GARY GLANCY
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G
ot milk, Claire Stevens?

Yes, she does, and makes her plain. "I kind of like the white milk," the first-grader at Jesse Boyd Elementary said as she ate lunch this past week.

Stevens is one of many Jesse Boyd students who was faithfully drinking chocolate milk before the psychology departments at Wofford College and University of South Carolina Upstate collaborated on a project they hope will inspire kids to make healthier food choices.

The pilot program, which concluded this past week, revealed a striking reversal in the percentage of kids who voluntarily selected healthier treats, as well as plain over flavored milk, through a little education and positive reinforcement.

"I think kids want to do the right thing," Wofford psychology professor David Pittman said. "They want to make healthy choices."

Pittman and USC Upstate psychology professor Jennifer Parker developed "Making Healthy Decisions" after supervisors from Chartwells, the food service company for Spartanburg District 7, made a presentation to the Spartanburg County Childhood Obesity Task Force about what's being done

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Weather

Cloudy, some rain

High 53

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Inside

The Goodfellows holiday campaign over the years has put food on the tables of thousands of families struggling to make ends meet.

This year's campaign is under way, and you can follow its progress and participate at www.goupsate.com

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5 will use terror trial as platform

AG says US, world will see leader for 'coward that he is'

By KAREN MATTHEWS
The Associated Press
NEW YORK — The five men facing trial in the Sept. 11 attacks will plead not guilty so that they can air their criticisms of U.S. foreign policy, the lawyer for one of the defendants said Sunday.

Scott Fenstermaker, the lawyer for accused terrorist Ali Abd al-Aziz Ali, said the men would not deny their role in the 2001 attacks but "would explain what happened and why they did it."

The U.S. Justice Department announced earlier this month that Ali and four other men accused of murdering nearly 3,000 people in the deadliest terrorist attack in the U.S. will face a civilian federal trial just blocks from the site of the destroyed World Trade Center.

Ali, also known as Ammar al-Baluchi, is a nephew of confessed WTC mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.

Mohammed, Ali and the others will explain "their assessment of American foreign policy," Fenstermaker said.

"Their assessment is negative," he said.

Fenstermaker met with Ali last week at the U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. He has not spoken with the others but said the men have discussed the trial among themselves.

Fenstermaker was first quoted in The New York Times in Sunday's editions. Critics of Attorney General Eric Holder's decision to try the men in a New York City civilian courthouse have warned that the trial would provide the defendants with a propaganda platform.

Dean Boyd, a spokesman for the Department of Justice, said Sunday that while the men might attempt to use the trial to express their
WARMING

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The symbol of global warming, but also fragile butterflies, colorful frogs and entire forests of the North American pine forests.

Over the past 12 years the Earth has lost 31 percent of its ice, and 2001 was the second-warmest year on record. The rate of warming is accelerating, according to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

This year, the Earth is on course to break the record set in 1998, which was itself a record.

In 2001, the average temperature was 0.8 degrees Celsius above the long-term average, the highest temperature ever recorded.

The increase in temperature is primarily due to the greenhouse gases emitted by human activities.

The effects of global warming are already being felt around the world, with more frequent and intense heatwaves, droughts, floods, and storms.

The international community is working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit the increase in global temperatures to below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The Paris Agreement, signed in 2015, aims to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius and to pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Many countries have pledged to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases, but the pace of action is not yet sufficient to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Climate scientists warn that failure to act decisively on climate change could lead to catastrophic consequences for the planet.

The urgent need for action is clear, and the stakes are high. It is essential that we take bold and immediate steps to reduce our emissions and transition to a low-carbon future.