

Washington, DC - The following are excerpts from U.S. Congressman Mike Pence's appearance on MSNBC today regarding the White House health care summit:

Reaction to the summit

"Well, my impression is that this isn't good government, it's bad TV. The reality is that while we were promised a serious negotiation, where the president a few weeks ago said that he was going to bring the various parties together and look for areas of common agreement. What we're seeing here from the president forward is just a restatement of the positions that the administration has taken, that Democrats in the House and Senate have taken, and Republicans are doing their level best to try and convey that the American people want this administration and Democrats in Congress to get the message, scrap the bill and start over with a clean sheet of paper.

"I got to tell you, I'm not impressed with what we are seeing, for all the president's repeated, somewhat condescending statements. He said to John McCain the campaign is over and we've got to get away from talking points. All we've got from the president today is talking points. All we've got is the president restating the bill that he dumped on the American people on Monday, and the American people want to scrap it and move on."

Can we get past the "talking points"

"Well I think it's up to the party that's in the majority and the party that's in the Oval Office to decide whether we get past it, and it really all begins with the president being willing to start with a clean sheet of paper, which he's obviously not willing to do. I think what millions of Americans, those that haven't tuned it out today, were hoping to see was a serious conversation about common ground. If the president had sat down and said, 'Ok look, we've had bills, you've had bills, let's write across the top of a piece of paper

what we could agree on, and everybody kick in and look for some modest, incremental step-by-step measures, I think that it would have been a very productive couple of hours.

"But instead, the president started out with a long monologue defending his government takeover of health care, and I have got to tell you, I really think the real winner today is The Price is Right. I mean I have to think that millions of Americans saw this as TV Land and not real negotiation, and tuned over to another channel pretty quick."

On reconciliation

"He didn't rule out the use of reconciliation. Harry Reid oddly denied that he's been talking about reconciliation. That would certainly be news to most of the reporters here in Washington. That's almost all they've been talking about is forcing the Senate bill or some version of ObamaCare 2.0 through on a simple majority. The president said he has an open mind? I haven't seen any evidence of that. What I think the American people have seen is almost like a professor with a petulant group of students. He has repeatedly interrupted Republicans. He has repeatedly jumped in and felt the need to answer every time Republicans outline our desire to allow Americans to purchase health insurance across state lines, allow businesses to have small business association plans, pass tort reform. Time and time again the president is stepping up and essentially rebutting each of those.

"So I don't see much evidence of an open mind here, what I see is a lot of political posturing, a lot of sentimental statements by Democrats around the table that all seem designed to get us to a point where they can throw their hands up in the air, say to the American public, you know what, we tried, but now we're just going to have to ram through that government takeover of health care that these Republicans aren't willing to help us with."