

Congressman Pence was interviewed by Greta Van Susteren regarding current health care reform efforts in Congress for her FOX News show, "On The Record:"



[Rep. Pence: Democrats Don't Have the Votes for Health Care Reform](#)

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GRETA VAN SUSTEREN, FOX NEWS HOST: It's a dogfight on Capitol Hill, both sides fighting for every single possible vote on the health care bill. So what's going to happen? Republican congressman Mike Pence went "On the Record."

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

VAN SUSTEREN: Congressman, nice to see you, sir.

REP. MIKE PENCE, R - IND.: Thank you, Greta.

VAN SUSTEREN: All right, where does this all stand, the votes? I mean, it's getting a little bit confusing for everybody.

PENCE: Right. Well, they don't have the votes. I mean, I think the American people deserve to know that despite a lot of blow and bluster and posturing, Democrats don't have the votes to pass the Senate bill.

VAN SUSTEREN: How bad is it for them?

PENCE: You know, I think it's -- I think it's -- I think it's very difficult because the bill that passed the United States Senate on Christmas Eve, filled with the "Cornhusker kickback" and the "Gator aid" and the "Louisiana purchase" I think is deeply offensive to the American people. This country doesn't want a government takeover of health care paid for with hundreds of billions in taxes and mandates and bureaucracy.

And a very serious problem is that the Senate bill does provide public funding for elective abortion, which is a departure from American policy over the last several decades. We've never provided public systems or public funding for elective abortion in this country.

And so I think they've got a real problem. I don't think they have the votes to pass the bill. And I think if the American people continue to raise their voices on a broad range of these issues that we can stop this bill in House of Representatives.

VAN SUSTEREN: All right, while the Speaker is sort of trying to corral her votes and get them together, do -- what is the procedure at this point? I mean, do you have any sort of timetable? Do you have any idea what is going to happen?

PENCE: Well, we really -- remember, in the minority, you're the little boy on the sidewalk, looking in the department store window.

VAN SUSTEREN: But no hints? No hints? No -- they don't tell you, Be here next week or...

PENCE: Well, we're getting some indications. They're talking about changing committee schedules and trying to clear the deck. But some of that can just be posturing. You know, the truth is, if they had the votes, we'd be voting right now...

VAN SUSTEREN: Right.

PENCE: ... on this bill.

VAN SUSTEREN: All right...

PENCE: And the American people deserve to know that. They don't have the votes to pass the Senate bill in the House. And I think if the American people, those that oppose a government takeover of health care, continue to let their voice be heard, we can stop this bill.

VAN SUSTEREN: All right. One of the sort of the interesting things that we are hearing from the Republican Party in the Senate is that the Senate parliamentarian says that the bill...

PENCE: Right.

VAN SUSTEREN: ... must first go to the White House to be signed and then come back for reconciliation. We haven't heard that directly from the parliamentarian, as far as I know. But does that change the strategy or the difficulty for the House Democrats?

PENCE: I think it -- I think it changes it immensely. Now you're...

VAN SUSTEREN: How?

PENCE: Now you're talking about at least a dozen pro-life Democrats who held out for some strong pro-life protections in the House version of the bill. Now you're asking them to vote for the most pro-abortion piece of legislation to come before Congress since Roe vs. Wade and to vote for that bill knowing that it's going to be signed by the president before you even have an opportunity to fix it.

And the other piece of it, too, is this bill can't be fixed. I mean, the Hyde amendment language, the language that was included in the Stupak- Pitts amendment on the right to life, only got 45 votes in the Senate. Whatever they promise pro-life Democrats, whatever pro-life Americans may think can be done to fix the Senate bill, it can't be fixed. Once the president's signature goes on that Senate bill, that's the law.

VAN SUSTEREN: So I guess it comes to the point that the House Democrats who are in favor of the so-called Stupak language or something similar would have to hope that when the bill comes back to the House and the Senate, that the Senate suddenly says, Look, OK, we're going to go your way and change the language. Is that essentially what they have to do, is sort of hope for best at that point?

PENCE: Well, under the -- but the parliamentarian's decision says what House members would have to do, even those that object to the sordid backroom deals that are included in the Senate bill, even those that object to the abortion coverage included in the bill, would have to vote for it and see it signed into law and accept a promise that some reconciliation bill would be accepted by the Senate.

VAN SUSTEREN: But that's just it, the promise. I mean, they'd have to -- they'd have to expect that the Senate promise...

PENCE: Right.

VAN SUSTEREN: ... would change the language. And we were talking to Senator Kyl yesterday, and they have 41 Republican senators who've signed (INAUDIBLE) basically saying, you know, they're not going to change things.

PENCE: Well, that's exactly right because the language that is necessary to protect American taxpayers from seeing their money used to provide coverage for elective abortions covers the entire bill, and therefore, it's subject to a procedural motion in the Senate that would require 60 votes. This Senate bill cannot be fixed with a separate bill. The American people deserve to know that.

VAN SUSTEREN: Can this bill pass with -- let's say that the Speaker loses all 12 of the Stupak voters. Can this bill still pass? Are the numbers still such that she can be willing to lose those?

PENCE: I don't believe it can. I really do believe that the American people don't want a government takeover of health care. And the Senate bill has been discredited on a broad range of issues...

VAN SUSTEREN: But can she corral her votes? Are there enough votes...

PENCE: If she can't -- you know, if she can't somehow get the 12 pro-life Democrats to go along with some kind of an arrangement, I -- I -- I think they can't pass the bill. And so, you know, it's imperative that people understand, people who cherish that long-standing tradition of not using taxpayer dollars or government systems to provide coverage for elective abortions -- it's important to know that the Senate bill can't be fixed. The proper position is just to reject the Senate bill. Let's scrap the bill, and then we can start over on the kind of commonsense incremental reforms that will respect the common sense and the values of the American people.

(END VIDEOTAPE)