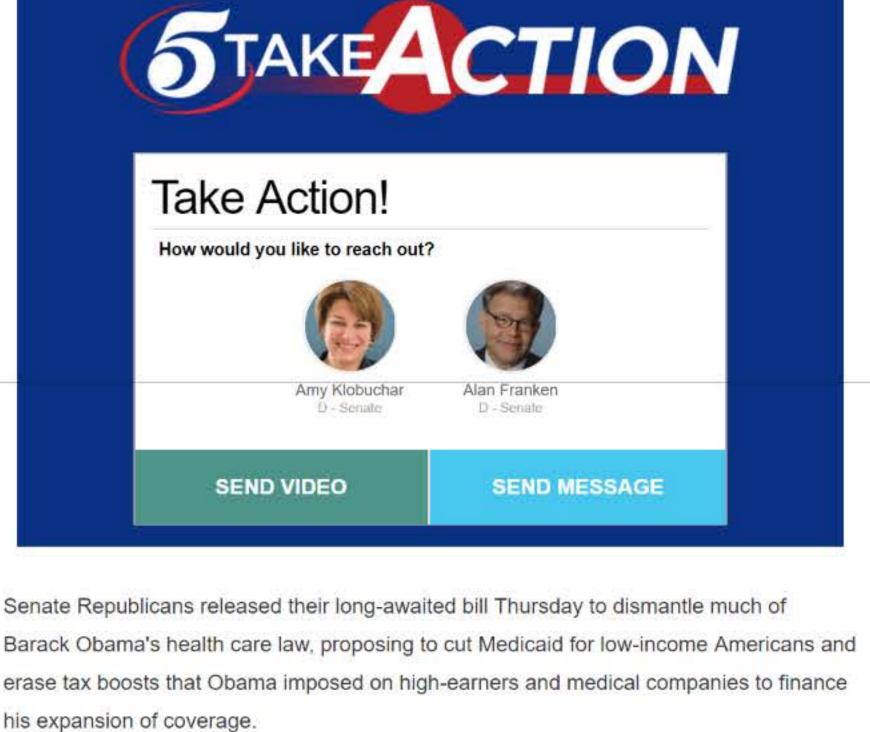
Medicaid, Alter 'Obamacare'



know your thoughts!

Do you agree with the GOP plan? Let senators Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken



states get waivers to ignore some coverage standards that "Obamacare" requires of insurers. And it would end the tax penalties under Obama's law on people who don't buy insurance — the so-called individual mandate — and on larger companies that don't offer coverage to their employees.

The bill would provide less-generous tax credits to help people buy insurance and let

hopes to push it through his chamber next week, but solid Democratic opposition and complaints from at least a half-dozen Republicans — have left its fate unclear. **RELATED: AP Sources: Senate**

GOP Would Halt Affordable Care

"We have to act," McConnell said on the

Act Penalties, Taxes

New York.

meaningful," he said

The measure represents the Senate GOP's

effort to achieve a top tier priority for

President Donald Trump and virtually all

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.,

Republican members of Congress. Senate

Democrats gathered on the Senate floor and defended Obama's 2010 overhaul. They said

families deserve better than its failing status quo."

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"We live in the wealthiest country on earth. Surely we can do better than what the

Senate floor. "Because Obamacare is a direct attack on the middle class, and American

like to whisk it to passage. McConnell has only a thin margin of error: The bill would fail if just three of the Senate's 52 GOP senators oppose it. RELATED: Dems Hit Secrecy of GOP Health Care Bill, Threaten

"If the bill is good for Nevada, I'll vote for it and if it's not, I won't," said Heller, whose state added 200,000 additional people under Obama's law.

The House approved its version of the bill last month. Though he lauded its passage in a

Rose Garden ceremony, Trump last week privately called the House measure "mean" and

called on senators to make their version more "generous."

At the White House on Thursday, Trump expressed hope for quick action.

The bill would phase out the extra money Obama's law provides to states that have expanded coverage under the federal-state Medicaid program for low-income people. The additional funds would continue through 2020, and be gradually reduced until they are

from states that have expanded the program have battled to prolong the phase-out, while

Beginning in 2020, the Senate measure would also limit the federal funds states get each year for Medicaid. The program currently gives states all the money needed to cover eligible recipients and procedures.

Unlike the House bill, which bases its subsidies for private insurance on age, the Senate

bill uses age and income. That focuses financial assistance on people with lower incomes.

they're keyed to the cost of a bare-bones plan, and because additional help now provided

Pearson said those subsidies will be smaller than under current law. That's because

The bill would let states get waivers to ignore some coverage requirements under

Under Obama's law, "many of those people would have gotten much more generous plans," she said.

get exemptions to Obama's prohibition against charging higher premiums for some people with pre-existing medical conditions, but the subsidies would be lower, Pearson said, making coverage less unaffordable.

Obama's law, such as specific health services insurers must now cover. States could not

For the next two years, it would also provide money that insurers use to help lower out-of-

an effort to shore up insurance markets around the country.

The Senate would also provide \$50 billion over the next four years that states could use in

those funds as reasons why they are abandoning some markets and boosting premiums. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said the House bill would cause 23 million

people to lose coverage by 2026. The budget office's analysis of the Senate measure is

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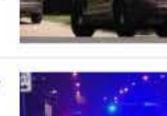
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GOP characterizations of the law as failing are wrong and said the Republican plan would boot millions off coverage and leave others facing higher out-of-pocket costs.

Some conservative and moderate GOP senators, too, have complained about McConnell's proposal, the secrecy with which he drafted it and the speed with which he'd

Republican health care bill promises," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-

Delays Sen. Dean Heller, R-Nev., facing a tough re-election fight next year, said he had "serious concerns' about the bill's Medicaid reductions.

"We'll hopefully get something done, and it will be something with heart and very

entirely eliminated in 2024. Ending Obama's expansion has been a major problem for some GOP senators. Some

conservative Republicans have sought to halt the funds quickly.

The Senate bill would also reduce subsidies now provided to help people without workplace coverage get private health insurance, said Caroline Pearson, a senior vice president of the health care consulting firm Avalare Health.

for deductibles and copayments would be discontinued.

Like the House bill, the Senate measure would block federal payments to Planned Parenthood. Many Republicans have long fought that organization because it provides abortions.

pocket costs for millions of lower income people. Trump has been threatening to discontinue those payments, and some insurance companies have cited uncertainty over

expected in the next few days. Credits Associated Press





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