

Paper Assignment ECO 40447

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Fall 2009

A family friend has arranged an internship for you with a famous network news program. You think the assignment will 'look good' on your resume so you take the internship. You quickly learn that sitting through class is infinitely more interesting than making copies and getting half-caf lattes for people that use lots of hairspray, but I digress.

A reporter for the program has been asked to moderate a 'town hall' forum on health care reform at a distinguished private university. The reporter has not followed the health care issue closely and needs to get up to speed quickly. The reporter is smart and has good economic intuition. Your task is to write an eight to 10 page, double spaced, 12 point font memo outlining the key aspects and likely consequences of a particular health care reform program. Your paper should address the following issues. First, outline the *key* characteristics of the reform proposal. You cannot discuss all aspects of the reform so make some decisions about what is important. Second, discuss the likely consequences of the reform in four key areas. Will the proposal: A) Increase insurance coverage? B) Control health care costs? C) Effectively deal with the fiscal concerns associated with the Medicare program? D) Reduce tax inequality associated with employer provided health insurance?

Right now, there are 3 major health care reform proposals percolating through congress

- Senator Max Baucus's bill, "America's Health Future Act"
- Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee's outline, "Affordable Health Choices Act" (S 1679)
- House Democratic Bill, "America's Affordable Health Choice's Act of 2009" (HR 3200)

Plus there are a couple of less well known bills that have received some press attention:

- "Health American's Act" proposed by Senators Ron Wyden and Bob Bennett
- "Patient's Choice Act of 2009" proposed by Senators Tom Coburn & Richard Burr & Representatives Paul Ryan & Devin Nunes, S 1099 and HR 2520)
- "Empowering Patient's First" proposed by Rep. Tom Price, HR 3400
- "AmeriCare Health Care Act of 2009" proposed by Rep. Pete Stark, HR 193

I have randomly assigned you one of these seven proposals and the assignment list is on the next page. No, you cannot trade your assignment with another student in class.

There are TONS of summaries of each of these proposals on the web. A great place to start is the Health Reform section of the Kaiser Family Foundation's web page (<http://healthreform.kff.org/>). A number of health policy scholars have written reviews of these proposals so you may want to search for them as well. You should also look at the web page of the Congressional Budget Office.

Please document all sources. You can discuss the proposals with others in the class but you must write the text yourself. Write in complete sentences. The memo is for a reporter, not your professor. Do not use economic jargon, but rather, try to explain economic concepts using everyday language. That said, this is an economics course and the four questions outlined above are economic outcomes. I want you to evaluate the policies from an economic perspective. This is an area of policy where the logic of economics can be very useful in evaluating competing proposals.

Grades will be based on i) accuracy of your summary of the reform proposal, ii) the thoughtfulness of your analysis of the likely aspects, iii) the thoroughness of your analysis, iv) the clarity of your prose.

The paper is due in hard copy at the start of class, Monday, December 7, 2009. This will give me about 10 days to grade the paper before the final exam.

Paper Assignments
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Baucus Bill

- 1 McCaughan
- 2 Fleming
- 3 King
- 4 Bugden
- 5 Porrazzo
- 6 Dubon
- 7 Farley

Coburn/Burr & Ryan/Nunes

- 1 Troy
- 2 Singer
- 3 Larsen
- 4 Ford
- 5 Eno
- 6 Kobeski
- 7 Burbick

Senate Democratic Bill

- 1 Jakopchek
- 2 Crowder
- 3 Solano
- 4 Kiernan
- 5 Schmidt
- 6 Bulger
- 7 Hornacek

Price Bill

- 1 Dirscherl
- 2 Kolda
- 3 Shook
- 4 Koop
- 5 Mathew
- 6 Burke

House Democratic Bill

- 1 Hauser Ibarra
- 2 Phan
- 3 O'Brien
- 4 Fedinets
- 5 Pires
- 6 Griswold
- 7 Foresman

Stark Bill

- 1 Willis
- 2 Ozimek
- 3 Streit
- 4 Laird
- 5 Hersh
- 6 Feeney

Wyden and Bennett

- 1 Muller
- 2 Klosterman
- 3 Dobleman
- 4 Karaskiewicz
- 5 Schreiber
- 6 Moren
- 7 Curley