Guest

Prevalent. -- guest: we are there to do with the constitution says we have to do, which is act as a check and a balance on president trump. A lot of us are waiting to see what happens, a lot of us are waiting to see if there is a replacement for the affordable care act. Right now, we are kind of in standby mode. We are concerned by what we have seen in these first few days, but we are in standby mode as we wait to see what the republicans are going to offer up.

Host

Host: we heard from representative cassidy and susan collins before you came on, about their version of a plan to replace the affordable care act. What do you think about it, on its face?

Guest

Guest: first of all, it is a plan. I don't think it is a plan that is going to make for markup -- more coverage around the country , but i have to tip my hat to them. For seven years, we have heard the republicans say they have a plan and they just haven't. The fact that they put forward an idea gives us something to talk about. The conversation can happen. They talk about high deductible hsa's. An hsa, if you are income taxpayer, which is about half the population, middle-class and above, that might make sense for you. If you are not an income taxpayer, that does not make sense for you. They've got some ideas and the way i am thinking about it, the group i am a member of -- -- the radically possible to do so. The affordable care act was never perfect. President obama said if you can make this better, we will be a participant in the project of doing so.

Host

Host: if you had a list of concerns about the affordable care act, what would they be?
Guest: we are getting out of the phase where the republican party is just lying about the affordable care act. You never notice they mention the 20 or 30 million americans that are covered for the first time, lanes of americans taking advantage of the fact that children up to the age of 26 and stay on the plan, that there are no lifetime limits. They never talk about that good stuff because that is inconsistent with the narrative. We seem to have moved beyond that and now we need to do is -- i will take president trump up on his promise. He said his plan would cover everybody. I heard that word, everybody. If he can put forward a plan that does that, i am all years.

Host

Host: we heard about cost and how before -- afford ability issues as well, are there concerns about the current plan for you?

Guest

Guest: the affordable care act, just to name two problems, the exchanges in the states in some states are unstable. Some people are leaving the exchange and we should try to get a robust competitive market in those exchanges. The second, and this was always true. The affordable care act was a good step forward on insurance reform. Insurance cannot turn your life away because she had breast cancer 10 years ago. It was not strong enough in a really important area which is how do we keep costs in this industry, which before the affordable care act were going up 12% a year, how do we keep costs in this industry under control? If we don't do that, eventually health insurance becomes health care on the 4 -- unaffordable for all of the most wealthy americans.

Host

Host: if you want to ask him questions, (202)-748-8000 for democrats, (202)-748-8001 for republicans and independents, (202)-748-8002.

Guest

Guest: which end of a younger, overlooking, there are a lot of democrats who have experienced in working in the private sector, we are democrats obviously, but we tend to be for, we are interested in innovation, in the future of education, the future of health care, so it is really a vibrant group of policy oriented, forward-looking legislators.
Host

Host: i called you vice chair, but you are chair, apologies. Independent line, jim, go ahead.

Caller

Caller: i had the pleasure of meeting with you one time in your office to discuss the affordable care act primer 2 -- prior to it even being introduced in congress. I am self-employed and covered under the affordable care act the affordable care act is working in can't -- in connecticut and the only comment i want to make is that if president trump had a hotel that was not working properly, he would not tear down the entire hotel, he would improve the areas that need improvement. That is what needs to happen with the affordable care act. There are a lot of areas that need improvement and i think it democrats and republicans worked together on this, -- you are right and i have been saying that there is -- if they do that, it would lay waste to the lives of tens of millions of americans who lives are better. I think the collins cassidy plan is the first-ever this direction, they will never say it but what they will do hopefully, unless they are on it, copy mission to her alone americans, but they will do is sit with ideas that will in fact make it better, which is what jim was suggesting.

Host

Host: here is paula.

Caller

Caller: yes. I would like to know if you are going to fight donald trump on his immigration efforts. I know that most democrats wouldn't consider me -- would consider people like me racist and that kind of stuff, so i will just tell you that this influx of immigrants is really hurting a lot of americans. Our country is not digesting all of these workers. I worked in the horse racing industry for 30 years and cannot get a job while illegals, and i am talking illegals are working. I don't see how that is a good thing for americans. Most of the time, i get the answer, well you are capable of getting a better job. You are educated, you are american. That sounds pretty racist to me. I would like to hear your comments on that.

Guest
Guest: thank you for the question. As with a lot of the things that trump has said. You said will i support him on his immigration things? We don't really know where he is on immigration. Let me give you an example. The wall. The wall was the centerpiece of his campaign. I listened to that over and over again and i know just enough to know that about half the people who come here illegally, the people you are talking about, about half of them don't sneak across the border. They overstay some kind of visa. They come as tourists and they just day. Apart from the fact that i'm not quite sure that in the context of going deficits we need to spend billions of dollars on some huge beautiful wall and i know the president says mexico will pay for it. I would like to see that magic trick. I am skeptical because half the people here illegally are not crossing a border. I will not be party to anything that singles out certain groups. The president has said he will put a complete stop on muslims coming here. There are thousands of officers in the new york police department who are muslim. We are not going to pick on single groups. To your question, if the president has better ideas on how to reduce the overall population of undocumented people, how to improve our visa system because boy can the system be improved. I survey don't understand all the details of it. 50 president puts forward constructive ideas that will make for a more forward-looking, simpler policy that is safer and reduces the number of people here that are undocumented, and makes it harder for businesses and contractors to hire people that are not entitled to work here, i am in board -- i am on board with that. Crazy ideas like stopping immigration of certain religious groups and building a wall, he should not expect my support on that.

Host

Host: have you heard any contact with the vice president over what the agenda is? Has he reached out to democrats?

Guest

Guest: not yet. There has been interaction between the vice president, the president and the republicans because they are the majority. I think the republicans are just as confused as we are. Just yesterday, that'll trump at his inaugural speech and everywhere has been saying nato has not been paying their fair share. Secretary of defense matus said -- matts said we have a unshakable obligation to nato. I think the reason we have not heard from pence or the president is the real -- republicans are working out exactly where he stands.

Host

Host: next, democrats line from virginia.
Caller

Caller: i am a physician and also an employer and i don't know that people realize this but long before obamacare, the insurance companies were raising rates up to 25% a year, which is why people kept changing their doctors, because everyone had to change their insurance policies. Hour like to see accountability at the level of the -- i would like to see accountability on the insurance companies. As a society, when each to do more to make insurance available for everybody if we are going to continue to have an insurance system. High deductibles will hurt lower income people, and i think that has been the trick of obamacare, that sort of the propaganda on why it does not work is because people chose to have high deductibles and a lower premium, not understanding that if you elect a program with a $7,000 deductible, you are basically going to get frustrated because nothing is covered. That really has to be looked at and people have to understand it and we are obligated to take the insurance companies to task. Hsa's would be great if they work like iras were you just put some money away and you can use it directly. As an employer, i found it is much worse coverage for my lower-level employees because they do not have the money to put away and the illustrated process of an hsa is as bad as getting health insurance. That is my two cents.

Guest

Guest: that is a real policy discussion about health care, and you will know that we are serious about making the health care industry and the affordable care act better when we are having those conversations. People say they want to have a catastrophic high deductible plan. People need to understand that you will have a lower premium, but when her daughter has a serious issue, you are on the hook for that high deductible. It could be $20,000 out of your pocket. People should make the decision based on the run circumstances, but i appreciate the conversation because you know we are having an honest conversation about health care if people are using the words complete failure, they are not having a serious conversation. If you are serious, you’ll hear things like the downsides and upsides of health savings accounts. If we are finally serious about talking about spiraling cost, you will hear talk about how we can make the american population and certain segments of the american population healthier. If you look at where we spend our health care dollar and if we have an insurance plan that is something that spreads cost amongst a big group of people, and of course medicare is that way, medicaid and private insurance is all that way. We all pay and and draw out. We will say how can we take on type one diabetes or type 2 diabetes, which is creating a huge obesity epidemic in this country and problems with chronic illnesses? How can we reduce the amount of smoking, the amount of alcoholism in this country? When you look at the health care system, you see that certain chronic diseases consume a huge amount of health care dollars. That does not make for a good bumper sticker or a good way for me to explain my select democrats rather than republicans, but you will know we are serious and we are having those conversations.
Host

Host: jim himes, the chair of the new democratic coalition and also serving on the intelligence committee. I want to ask your thoughts about mike pompeo becoming cia director.

Guest

Guest: mike is a good friend. I will tell you, i disagree with a lot of what mike pompeo has said in the past. He has been pretty aggressive on things like torture. I will tell you, and i know him very well, that he is a very smart, very committed guy, committed to doing his job well. I think he is going to do a good job at getting out of the moat he was in, and congress and as a politician. To be what the cia director needs to be, he needs to be a good manager. I think mike is going to make the change to a role where he has to get rid of any political overlay he has in favor of producing the best intelligence.

Host

Host: since you brought it up, the president is going to the cia and talking about when he was there. Is that a means to rebuild relationships?

Guest

Guest: it was the opposite. I know enough people at the agency to know that it was a big step backward. It was sad because the president on his twitter feed had compared the intelligence community to the nazis. He made fun of them for getting the iraq war wrong. Then he goes to the cia and he stands in front of this most sacred geography at langley, those stars that symbolize or represent people that are given their lives answers talking about inauguration crowds and how terrible the media is. He brings a big crew of his people to cheer and applaud. The cia is staffed by people who work hard to ascertain truth and to really set aside their bias. They don't always succeed, but they are profoundly serious and the speech the president gave was one of the most unserious things i have seen. My friend mike has a heck of a challenge because now the cia is feeling denigrated. They are not sure whether the president is going to listen to their advice. Mike has a heck of a management problem.
Host

Host: let's hear from harold in minnesota, republican line.

Caller

Caller: when we start talking about the government running health care, i just wish that people would look at the v.a. System. I am now in my fourth the a system. -- v.a. System. This is the government that is running this damn thing.

Guest

Guest: where i come from in connecticut, the v.a. Is very popular and there have been high-profile examples of failure, particularly in the southwest. By and large, the programs, and let's be clear, the programs for the government quote, runs health care, you could include medicare in that, some 60 million senior citizens to their insurance on health care. Medicare is very popular with senior citizens. That is a government single-payer system. The v.a. Has some problems in some localities. Despite what republicans have been saying, it is not -- obamacare is not government running health care. You still go to doctors who work for themselves. In obamacare, the government just says if you are going to have an insurance plan, it will have minimum standards so you don't get caught by surprise. If you get cancer oil if your child needs a hearing aid, that it is there to help you. The idea that obamacare is government run health care is a fantasy. Obamacare is what mitt romney, the republican governor of massachusetts, implement it in massachusetts. Obamacare came out of the herald found 8 -- the heritage foundation as an alternative to the health care plan that bill and hillary clinton wanted to implement. It sounds fun to say if you are a tea party are, but it is not true.

Host

Host: let's hear from maryland, independent line.

Caller

Caller: i am calling to make a comment about medicare and how doctors absolutely take advantage of it. My husband recently was given a medication for sleep, and as soon as he was leaving, the doctor said by don't you make another follow-up appointment so we can see how the medicine is working? Why do we need to make these following -- if the medicine is working, it's working, if it is not, then you need to see him or change it, and that can be done over the
phone, but they try to extract as many visits is possible. That must be putting a lot of strain on medicare.

**Guest**

Guest: mary put her finger on one of these things i said he will see if we are talking seriously about health care. Think about what she said, which is the whole health care industry, 17% of the economy, trillions of dollars, is based on a model where a doctor, a drug company, hospital, all the providers do better when they do more, not when they produce good results, not all of us are healthy, but they do well when they do more. When they sell more drugs, take more x-rays, have longer hospital stays. You don't need to be a business school student to understand that with a system for -- rewards the providers doing more, they will do more. One of the interesting things we will talk about is how can we migrate the system to one where like a lot of us, i run for reelection every two years and if the -- if at the end of two years mica situates don't think i did a good job, i'm finding a new job. What if we told the health care system we paid well for producing good results. A system like that would be a huge step forward.

**Host**

Host: we asked our previous guest about plans to change or make changes to. Frank -- two dod - - to dodd frank. We will like to know what you think about these possible attempts.

**Guest**

Guest: i will say about that what i did about before the cataract, there was no question it was a big step forward and sometimes our republican friends forget where we were exactly eight years ago. We were sort of stepping out of a bomb crater of destruction. Almost one million jobs being lost every month. Banks really at risk of going bankrupt. The necessity for a republican president a few months before, to put for the biggest bailout the country is ever seen. It was not that long ago that the world was ruined by misbehavior of the banks and wall street. It was a response to that and it said in the future, you will not be able to go into a neighborhood and sell a mortgage to somebody that you know, they cannot pay. Was it perfect? Was it scrolls attended by god? No of course not -- handed down by god? No, of course not. A lot of us in greater could be improvements. I am happy that the large banks are no longer taking big proprietary bets that the taxpayers are no longer backing those bets. It is clear that it was tough on our smaller and community banks. A lot of us would love to see some of these regulations for the smaller banks that could be deemed one way or the other, operating safely because we
need them to compete against the big banks. There is lots of room for us to have a conversation about making it better, but the republicans in to realize that it was a reaction to an apocalyptic moment in our history and that a lot of what is there just makes sense to continue.

Host

Host: ben from pennsylvania, democrat line.

Caller

Caller: so many things to talk about. I want to keep it to the affordable care act as something that affects me. Let me briefly explain that before obamacare, I had a good health care plan with a $500 deductible. You democrats talk about how republicans are going to raise these premiums and deductibles. My deductible right now is $13,000 thanks to obamacare. The cost of that is $600 a month. I only make you much money to get any subsidies. I have three daughters and a son. Do you really think that is affordable for me? I like to know what the democrats plan was about that. I like to talk about the bank bailouts. Obama continued the bank bailouts when he took office and all this appointing of goldman sachs executives to the secretary of treasury is absurd. It is the same thing trump is doing, oil executives, bankers. Neither party has done what they said they would do. I have a whole bunch of great ideas for obamacare that i think would work. I don't know how you guys can't come up with any.

Guest

Guest: i hope ben will pass his ideas onto his representative. On the topic of the bailout, first of all, if you are criticizing president obama for appointing goldman sachs executives to positions of high power, when into you look at the trump cabinet. I think it is a little unfair, and people are to be judged on their ideas and their performance, not necessarily what is on the resume. Back to the bailout. This was a george w. Bush program. I was not in congress at the time, but it was put in place to keep the banks from complete the disappearing with all of the implications that would've happened. Obama took a piece of that and if you lived in michigan, you know how important this was, if he said that bailout was taken to see the auto industry and millions of jobs that are directly or indirectly related to the auto industry. Talk to anyone from michigan or where we produce automobiles and we don't want to see that happen again. Government bailouts are no way to run an economy, but i think the president took a bad situation and help a lot of people -- helped a lot of people.
Host
Host: representative jim himes joining us. You can continue the conversation. How can people best reach you?

Guest
Guest: they can show up in my office or call in. I am very active on facebook and twitter and using social media as a way of getting input. Then, i don't represent you, what if you have some good thoughts, put them up and i will take a look.

Host
Host: thank you. Pictures of sean spicer, the white house press secretary on the front page of the washington times. This from his first official press conference, yesterday. While the topics was his relationship with the media or the trauma ministrations relationship with the media. He defended the a ministrations compatible start with the media, saying president trump and his aides have a right to correct what they see as a journalistic mistake. We want to ask you what you think of the role of media in covering the white house and washington as well. (202)-748-8000 for democrats, (202)-748-8001 for republicans. (202)-748-8002 for independents. If you are a member of the media, (202)-748-80023.

Unidentified speaker
>> the congressman was just talking about donald trump's cabinet. We want to remind our viewers of the status of several of those nominees. The usual process for these nominees includes a committee hearing, a committee vote and then a senate floor vote. Some updates on where the nominees are. Rex tillerson, nominee for secretary of state got his vote in committee, yesterday according to several new sources . One of the toughest votes to get in that hearing was marco rubio. Marco rubio sharply questioning rex tillerson in his committee hearing. He past 11 to 10 so his nomination now goes to a floor vote -- he passed 11 to 10, so his nomination goes to a float -- a floor vote. The congress committee will be taking up the nomination of elaine chao for secretary of education, holding a vote on her nomination and wilbur ross for secretary of the commerce department. Scheduled votes in the energy committee on rick perry's nomination for the energy department and ryan's inky for department of the interior -- ryan inky -- ryan zinke for department of the interior. Nikki haley has been nominated to be the u.s. Representative to the u.n. Also the vote to the -- vote on the nomination for housing and urban development, dr. Ben carson. Once all these nominees pastor committee votes, then they face floor votes. Also committee hearings taking place and you can watch some of those on c-span.
Those will include the senate finance committee hearing for tom price, the head of health and human services. You can see that at 10:00 on c-span3. The nomination for mike mulvaney to head the white house office of management and budget. Some news on those nominees from Politico. This story noting that mike mulvaney, who is part of the conservative freedom caucus is likely to face tough questions at his confirmation hearing, on his payment -- admission he did not pay for the $15,000 in taxes for his triplets' nannies. He learned of the failure to pay taxes during the confirmation review process and then paid what he owed in federal taxes, state taxes and any penalties. It will certainly be a topic that will come up. Also according to Politico, committee staff released a memo to lawmakers raising some red flags according to Politico that came up during the review of tom price's tax returns. Price had been under fire for investing in health care stocks while also working on legislation that would impact those companies. Look for those questions during another