

Another delay to Obama health law

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The White House on Wednesday unveiled another delay in implementing President Barack Obama's signature health law—apparently to shield vulnerable Democrats in mid-term elections.

The Obama administration said that insurers could continue to market health care plans that do not meet the minimum standards of the new law until October 1, 2016.

Officials had already offered an extension to people who had the existing plans, amid a political furor over Obama's frequent and now discredited promise that if people liked their [health coverage](#) under the new law, they could keep them.

The administration said that the move would give consumers more choice in America's health care marketplace.

"We've always said we were going to take steps to smooth out the implementation," White House spokesman Jay Carney told reporters traveling with Obama in Massachusetts.

A fact sheet explaining the new policy hinted at the political motivation, noting that it had been developed in close consultation with lawmakers including Senators Mary Landrieu, Mark Warner, Jeanne Shaheen and Mark Udall—all of whom are up for reelection in November.

Republicans lashed out at the decision, saying it was a politically crass move designed to protect Democratic candidates.

"By announcing a new delay in requiring that policies meet minimum coverage standards, the administration avoids a new round of health policy cancellations set to hit shortly before the November elections," said Republican Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.

"What makes this latest delay so troubling is the fact that it was prompted not by the heartbreaking stories of millions of Americans but by the private pleadings of a handful of endangered Democrats."

The rule change was the latest delay or modification to the [health care](#) law, which ranks as Obama's signature domestic achievement but has been plagued by problems and political unpopularity.

The law is a significant weight on many Democrats fighting mid-term elections, in which the party is seen as having little chance to take back the House of Representatives and in deep peril of losing control of the Senate.

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