

Obamacare critic confirmed as US health secretary

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The US Senate narrowly confirmed Tom Price as President Donald Trump's pick for health secretary Friday, appointing a fierce Obamacare critic who aims to implement a Republican promise to tear up the divisive health care reform law.

Price, a congressman from Georgia and former orthopedic surgeon, was confirmed as head of the Department of Health and Human Services along strict party lines, with the chamber's 52 Republicans voting for and 47 Democrats against.

Announcing 62-year-old Price as his pick last month, Trump praised him as "exceptionally qualified to shepherd our commitment to repeal and replace Obamacare and bring affordable and accessible [health care](#) to every American".

But Democratic senators arguing against Price's confirmation during a debate that stretched into the early hours of Friday morning said he would hurt millions of Americans who depend on former president Barack Obama's signature [health care reform](#).

Formally known as the Affordable Care Act, it has provided health coverage to 20 million Americans and pushed the level of uninsured to a historic low of less than 10 percent.

"Congressman Price's record demonstrates that he puts a partisan agenda and corporate interests before the health and economic well-being of our

families," said Elizabeth Warren, a leader of the party's progressive wing.

"The American people deserve a secretary of health and human services who will help more Americans receive quality, affordable [health insurance coverage](#), not one who supports stripping it away by repealing the [affordable care act](#) without a replacement."

Democratic Senator Ron Wyden argued that Price's nomination was a referendum on the future of health care in America.

"This is about whether the United States is going to go back to the dark days when health care worked only for the healthy and the wealthy," he said.

During the confirmation process, Price was accused of insider trading after reports surfaced that he bought shares in a medical device company last year before introducing legislation in the House that would benefit the firm days later.

Price denied any wrongdoing.

Doing away with Obama's signature domestic achievement is a top priority for Republicans, who control both chambers of Congress.

Although they promise to replace the current system, they have yet to provide details of how.

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