

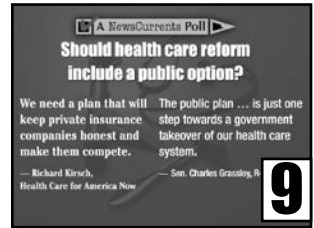
# Poll reminder: health care and the public option

There's still time to vote in our first poll of the year.

## BASIC

Not long ago, NewsCurrents presented a story about the biggest debate in government right now — what to do about health care. Much of the disagreement over this issue has to do with something called the “public option.” This would be government health insurance that people could choose instead of private health insurance, although people who like their private insurance can keep it. People who are against it say the public option would lead to the government taking over health care, and it would cost the government too much money. But supporters of a public option say it would give people more choices and

would force private insurance companies to lower their costs to compete with the government plan. They point out that the government already provides health insurance to older Americans, to poor people, and to people in the armed services and veterans. Congress will vote on whether to have a public option in its health care bill, and you can vote, too! **Should the bill have a public option? Why or why not?** Vote now in the NewsCurrents poll. END



## GENERAL

Not long ago, NewsCurrents presented a story about the biggest debate going on in Congress and throughout much of the country right now — what to do about health care. Members of Congress are debating a health care reform bill, and the biggest disagreement is over the “public option.” This would be government health insurance for people who can’t afford private insurance, or for people whose jobs don’t offer insurance. Opponents of the public option say that it could drive private companies out of business. They also say it would lead to the government controlling health care in the United States. Supporters of this plan say it would help cover the millions of people without health insurance. They say

it would force private insurance companies to lower their prices to compete with the government plan, because the government plan would not include the big profits that private insurance companies take. They also point out that the government already runs some very popular health insurance programs for the elderly and for people in the armed services. **Which of the quotes here do you agree with more? Why?**

Congress will decide whether or not their health care reform bill will include a public option, and you can vote on it, too. **Should the health care reform bill include a public option? Why or why not?** Vote in this NewsCurrents poll, and in a few weeks we’ll report on the results. END

## ADVANCED

In a recent issue, NewsCurrents outlined the public debate going on about health care reform. The most controversial aspect of the debate has been the so-called “public option.” **What do you know about this plan?** It would be a non-profit, government-run plan offered alongside private plans as part of a National Health Exchange. It would serve the uninsured, as well as employees of small businesses that opted to participate. Opponents of a public option say it would force private insurers out of business because they couldn’t compete with a non-profit plan. They also believe that a public option would lead to government-controlled health care, with the government deciding what kind of care patients can get. Supporters of a public

option say that private insurers are now making decisions on patients’ care and these decisions have more to do with profits than any patient’s well being. Supporters also say a public option would cover millions who don’t have health insurance, and that it would help lower everyone’s costs by forcing private insurers to compete with the public, non-profit plan.

At press time, it was unclear whether the Democrats’ health care reform bill would include a public option or not. **What do you think? Should the Democrats’ reform bill include a public option? Did you see President Obama’s speech to a joint session of Congress last week on this issue? What did he say? Did it affect your opinion?** Vote now in the NewsCurrents poll if you haven’t already done so. END