

WASHINGTON - Today, Congressman Mike Quigley (D-IL) issued the following statement in advance of the House vote on health care reform:

"I was pleased yesterday to hear that the 'deem and pass' maneuver was abandoned and that the House will have a fair and transparent up-or-down vote on the Senate health care bill today. My constituents voted for me to have a vote, and it's only right that I am able to use it on an issue this critical to the American people.

I was also glad to hear that House leadership refused to entertain any side deal with anti-choice lawmakers in exchange for their support. I made it clear to the leadership of the House that I would not support a bill which included such a deal.

As for my vote, I understand many would have preferred that I announce my intentions sooner, some perhaps before the final bill text was even released. However, this bill and this process have changed so drastically in the last 24 hours, particularly when it came to the issue of choice, that I could not commit myself to a bill of this importance before knowing what it would contain. Even now, hours before the final vote, there is a chance for a last-minute amendment that could compromise women's health care.

In the end, I have always been committed to reforming the status quo to bring health care access to the 69,500 people in Illinois' Fifth District who currently do not have it and improve it for the half-million who do, but not at the expense of a woman's ability to choose. Unless there is a last-minute change to the bill that compromises this right, I plan to vote 'yes.'

No one can claim that this bill is perfect. It is rather an historic place to start from which we will review, refine, and most importantly, help millions of American families for the first time in generations. We are on the brink of history, and it is an honor to be a part of it."