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Obama dismissive as US House votes to repeal 'Obamacare'

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US House Republicans took the increasingly routine step Tuesday of voting to repeal "Obamacare," a seemingly doomed effort that President Barack Obama ridiculed as making "absolutely no sense."

Obama's rivals in the House of Representatives have held several dozen votes in recent years to strike down, defund or otherwise derail the president's landmark health care reform law.

They were largely ignored by Democratic leaders in the Senate. But with Republicans now in control of both chambers, the GOP is hoping to force Obama into vetoing a measure that would torpedo his signature domestic legislative accomplishment.

The House voted 239 to 186 in support of repeal, with just three Republicans in opposition. No Democrats supported the bill.

Republicans argue that the law has discouraged small business hiring, contributed to reduced work hours, imposed higher insurance premiums on many American families, and dented economic growth.

Democrats counter that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, as it is formally known, has expanded or made it easier for millions of uninsured to get health coverage since it became law in 2010.

"I don't know whether it's the 55th or the 60th time that they are taking this vote," said Obama ahead of the House action.

"But I've asked this question before: Why is it that this would be at the top of their agenda, making sure that folks who don't have health care aren't able to get it?"

The answer "is very simple: the law is a disaster," House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy shot back on the House floor.

"We still can't afford its costs, and the American people still don't want it."

The Obamacare strike-down is expected to fail in the Senate, where Democrats can use procedural blocking tactics to forestall a vote.

Nevertheless, conservative Senator Ted Cruz has introduced the Obamacare Repeal Act.

Even a repeal is passed by both chambers, Obama has vowed to veto such a bill.

Slapping Obamacare has become a rite of passage for freshmen Republican lawmakers.

While legislatively futile, it is a political and fundraising tool that allows new conservative legislators to tell supporters back home they voted against a law that has remained unpopular with Republicans.

House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi dismissed the latest repeal effort as "baying at the moon."

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