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The 'Ted Kennedy Public Option' in the 'Ted Kennedy Health Care' bill

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NCR Today

The debate over whether or not to name a health care bill after Ted Kennedy has taken a fresh (and, in my opinion, welcomed) turn.

Here is what David Waldman of the Daily Kos has written today:

The temptation to name the health care reform bill after fallen health care champion Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA) is as understandable as it is overwhelming. But with the bill currently still at the mercy of players who are, shall we say, not as clearly dedicated to a product that offers the kind of help Kennedy envisioned, I suggest that we not offer them the opportunity to attach his name to anything less than a bill he would have fought for.

So while it's undoubtedly in that spirit that the Progressive Change Campaign Committee and others have begun their drive to honor Kennedy's memory by demanding that the HELP Committee's bill be passed and named after him, I suggest that it serves us and the Senator's memory better if our essential element -- a strong public option -- carries his name instead.

I suggest this because I expect the temptation will be equally overwhelming to attach Kennedy's name to a bill that's been significantly weakened in the process of merging competing versions in each house, and then again in conference between the House and Senate, even if that bill might not have met with his approval.

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