

\$940-billion estimate clears way for House healthcare vote

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The Congressional Budget Office on Thursday estimated the cost of the proposed healthcare overhaul at \$940 billion over 10 years, a scoring that clears the way for a House vote as soon as Sunday.

Democrats greeted the number with joy because it was less than the \$1-trillion price tag that they were using as a ceiling. Republicans immediately pledged to fight the healthcare overhaul through its convoluted parliamentary route in the House and Senate. "We're absolutely giddy over the great news we have gotten from CBO," Rep. James Clyburn (D-S.C.), the majority whip, told reporters.

The CBO scoring sets the stage for the Democrats' push to collect the 216 votes needed to pass the bill. Democrats have pledged to allow 72 hours for public study, meaning the soonest the vote could come is on Sunday, when President Obama is scheduled to fly to Asia.

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