



America's healthcare industry has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to block the introduction of public medical insurance and stall other reforms promised by Barack Obama. The campaign against the president has been waged in part through substantial donations to key politicians.

Supporters of radical reform of healthcare say legislation emerging from the US Senate reflects the financial power of vested interests – principally insurance companies, pharmaceutical firms and hospitals – that have worked to stop far-reaching changes threatening their profits.

The industry and interest groups have spent \$380m (£238m) in recent months influencing healthcare legislation through lobbying, advertising and in direct political contributions to members of Congress. The largest contribution, totalling close to \$1.5m, has gone to the chairman of the senate committee drafting the new law.

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