

## **LEG REG REVIEW – SPECIAL REPORT 2010, 8th Issue March 22**

*LEG REG REVIEW is a periodic newsletter produced by PHILLIPS ASSOCIATES, a professional lobbying and consultant firm located near the State Capitol. It contains news on the legislative and regulatory scene in Pennsylvania that may be of interest to the Insurance and Business Communities. It is a free member benefit for those who are members of the Pennsylvania Association of Health Underwriters (PAHU) or Manufacturers Association of South Central PA (MASCPA). Subscription information may be obtained by contacting PHILLIPS ASSOCIATES at 717/728-1217 FAX 717/728-1164 or e-mail to [xenobun@aol.com](mailto:xenobun@aol.com). Please email [jtrout2792@aol.com](mailto:jtrout2792@aol.com) supplying both your name and e-mail address if you wish to be removed from this list.*

### **US HOUSE PASSES HUGE HEALTH BILL**

**By seven votes last night the US House of Representatives 219-212 narrowly passed the massive health care bill passed by the Senate (HR 3590) and sent it on to the President for his signature.**

Votes on HR 3590, were along party lines with Democrats (mostly) voting in the affirmative and Republicans closing ranks to all vote no. Pennsylvania Republicans voted no. PA Democrats except for Rep. Tim Holden from central PA and Jason Altmire from Pittsburgh voted yes. Holden and Altmire were at ground zero in terms of intense lobbying but held true to their original belief that the legislation was going to add significantly to entitlements and to the nation's budget woes. In all, 34 Democrats nationally voted no.

A major turning point occurred when pro-life Democrat Rep. Stupak from Michigan secured a promise from the White House that President Obama would issue an Executive Order expressing the view that nothing in HR 3590 contradicts the Hyde Amendment which prohibits federal dollars from being spent on abortions. This gave political cover to Democrats from conservative districts to vote yes. Two PA congresspeople who voted yes, Rep. Christopher Carney from north central and northeast PA and Kathy Dahlkemper from northwest PA, had both voted for the original House bill because of tough anti-abortion language not found in the Senate bill passed last night. Adding to their political cover was a publicized disagreement between the US Conference of catholic Bishops who said that HR 3590 offered an abortion loophole versus a national Catholic nuns' organization that concluded the opposite. As Rep. Carney put it in his Sunday statement, "This bill continues the longstanding ban on public funding for abortion, a factor that weighed heavily on my mind in recent days."

### **Reconciliation Bill**

A separate vote was taken on fix-it legislation (the reconciliation bill) to address some of the criticisms of the Senate-passed legislation such as the so-called Cornhusker Amendment. The reconciliation bill, HR 4872, passed again on a mostly party line vote of 219-211 (with one Democrat not voting). 33 Democrats voted no. this bill goes to the Senate where a simple majority will send it to the President.

In a March 22 letter going to PA congresspeople who voted no, the Pennsylvania Association of Health Underwriters (PAHU) commended them for "doing the right thing" and by understanding that "If it does not reduce costs, it is not health reform". This followed PAHU's weekend faxing a copy of a PA House Resolution sponsored by Rep. Gordon Denlinger (R-Lancaster) imploring Congress not to pass HR 3590 because of its impact on the PA state Budget in four years because of the expansion of the state's Medicaid entitlement program eligibility and the corresponding escalation in required state matching funds. The fax went to all PA congressional offices.