

# Republicans Flirt With Kicking Americans Off Health Care to Fund Iran War



Rep. Jodey Arrington (R-Texas) talks with reporters outside the U.S. Capitol on Thursday, March 19, 2026. Tom Williams/CQ-Roll Call, Inc/Getty Images

As Donald Trump and Republicans scramble to find funds for an illegal, unpopular war that has spiraled out of their control, they are once again eying [health care](#) funding as a potential target for spending cuts.

Last week, [Politico reported](#) that House Budget Chair [Jodey Arrington](#) (R-Texas) has floated the possibility of adding additional defense spending to an upcoming reconciliation bill, and offsetting the increase through cuts to “state and social programs.” The Pentagon is seeking \$200 billion from Congress to pay for the ongoing American-Israel war against Iran.

[Axios confirmed the report](#) on Monday. “There’s other items we’re looking at right now, especially in the areas of fraud and waste and abuse that we’re working through with our members,” House Majority Leader Steve Scalise (R-La.) told the publication, invoking the sort of language Republicans have used in the past to justify their attacks on health care funding.

The so-called Big Beautiful Bill that Republicans passed last year cut over \$1 trillion from Medicaid and health care spending, and is expected to cost millions their health insurance. Trump and the GOP claimed the legislation’s cuts to Medicaid and other social safety net programs were [in service of getting rid of “fraud”](#) from government spending. In reality, most adults receiving Medicaid already work, fraud is rare, and most Medicaid fraud that does take place is [committed by providers](#), not the individuals who were ultimately kicked off of their plans. Republicans in Congress also last year

allowed enhanced health care subsidies for health care plans purchased through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) [to expire](#), causing premiums to expire and millions more to lose health care.

Republicans are once again planning to target financial assistance for ACA plans. According to [an assessment](#) by the Congressional Budget Office last year, when a similar move to target cost-sharing reductions was considered but ultimately left off the table, the cuts now being proposed would result in an additional 300,000 Americans losing health care coverage, and an increase in out of pocket costs for some ACA plan holders. That's on top of the 14 million Americans already expected to lose coverage by 2030 as a result of the Big Beautiful Bill.

Rep. Arrington's office did not immediately respond to a request or comment from *Rolling Stone*.

Despite hardline Republicans' push to make good on the Department of Defense's request, additional funding for armed conflict with Iran is not universally popular within the GOP.

"I'm not for the war, and so I'm not for funding more of the war," Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) [told MS NOW](#). Rep. Lauren Boebert (R-Colo.) has publicly stated she is a "no" vote to any supplemental aid for the [Iran war](#). Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas) said he would need to see the administration [articulate clear goals](#) for the conflict before authorizing a "blank check." Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) echoed similar concerns. "It begs the question, how long do they plan to be there? What are the goals? Is this the first \$200 billion? Does this turn into a trillion?" he said in an interview with CNN.

The war against Iran is widely unpopular, with over 60 percent of the country [disapproving of the conflict](#). That number is expected to increase as the economic fallout from the continued closure of the Strait of Hormuz ripples across domestic and international markets. The [possibility](#) that Trump might outright deploy American service members for an on-the-ground invasion of Iran is also unlikely to boost his numbers. But Republicans, unable to publicly buck the demands of the administration they've sworn fealty to, are once again showing themselves willing to punish their own constituents for his follies.