

# Johnson says 'mess of Obamacare' would've stayed without his vote today

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U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson said today he voted to begin debate on repealing the Affordable Care Act because otherwise the “mess of Obamacare would’ve remained in place.”

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell pressured Johnson and other GOP holdouts to start debate on repealing the ACA.

In a conference call with local reporters today, Johnson again criticized the partisan approach Senate GOP leaders took in trying to develop a replacement plan, the details of which are still in the works. But he said while there’s still no consensus on “where we ought to go,” he agrees with the consensus from his Senate GOP colleagues that Congress needs to “keep moving” forward with a debate.

“The responsible thing to do is to recognize we’ve got a big mess on our hands and do everything we can to start fixing that mess,” he said.

Johnson, R-Oshkosh, was the last Republican senator to vote to begin debating proposals to repeal the Affordable Care Act, with the 50-50 deadlock in the Senate leading to Vice President Mike Pence breaking the tie.

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, meanwhile, joined Democrats and two GOP senators in voting to block the debate.

“The people of Wisconsin did not send me to Washington to take people’s health care away,” she said. “We should be working together to make things better, not worse. Let’s work to stabilize the market, make health care more affordable, and take on drug companies and rising prescription drug costs.”

Johnson, who’s been a consistent critic of the process Senate GOP leaders took, had a discussion with McConnell as he arrived to vote on the motion. Johnson was the

last Republican, following U.S. Sen. John McCain's return to the floor after his brain cancer diagnosis, to vote.

But he said arriving later than other GOP senators was "happenstance" as he was just wrapping up interviewing President Trump's pick to be FBI director. Johnson said his conversation with McConnell centered on his desire to "continue to be a possible influence" on the discussions.

"I'm trying to get as good as bill as possible," Johnson said.

*This post has been updated with additional details. See more from Johnson's comments in today's PM Update.*