

## Senate Committee Eyes Bipartisan ACA Fixes

Following Congress' return from August recess, the Senate HELP Committee has scheduled four hearings to discuss a possible bipartisan reform package to stabilize Affordable Care Act markets. Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and ranking member Patty Murray (D-Wash.) are hopeful the committee can put together a modest package of reforms before the end of the month.

For their first hearing, the committee invited insurance commissioners from five states to recommend reforms that could garner bipartisan support. In addition to testifying before the full 23-member committee, Alexander noted that the commissioners met with 31 other senators prior to the hearing. In their remarks, the commissioners endorsed funding for CSR payments and reinsurance mechanisms in the near-term.

Separately, a bipartisan coalition of governors, led by John Kasich (R-Ohio) and John Hickenlooper (D-Colo.), released an open letter to congressional leaders calling for a package of reforms, including several provisions promoted by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.

### Potential elements of a bipartisan ACA stabilization package

#### Provisions proposed by Chairman Lamar Alexander

- ▶ \$7 billion to fund cost-sharing reduction subsidies, a priority for Senate Democrats, in order to lower premiums
- ▶ Changes to section 1332 waivers, to give states additional flexibility in administering the ACA's individual exchanges

#### Select provisions proposed by bipartisan coalition of governors

- ▶ Reinsurance mechanisms to stabilize insurance risk pools
- ▶ Verify special enrollment qualifications, and limit ACA enrollment by those eligible for other programs such as Medicaid and Medicare
- ▶ Shorten the 90-day grace period for premium non-payment
- ▶ Increase federal outreach efforts, especially to young individuals
- ▶ Fix the "family glitch," which prevents individuals who cannot afford employer plans from enrolling on the exchanges
- ▶ Give states more flexibility to define benefit reference plans
- ▶ Provide fast-track approval for state waivers that build on waivers already approved for other states
- ▶ Encourage population-based payment models and value-based insurance designs, to reward cost-effective approaches to care

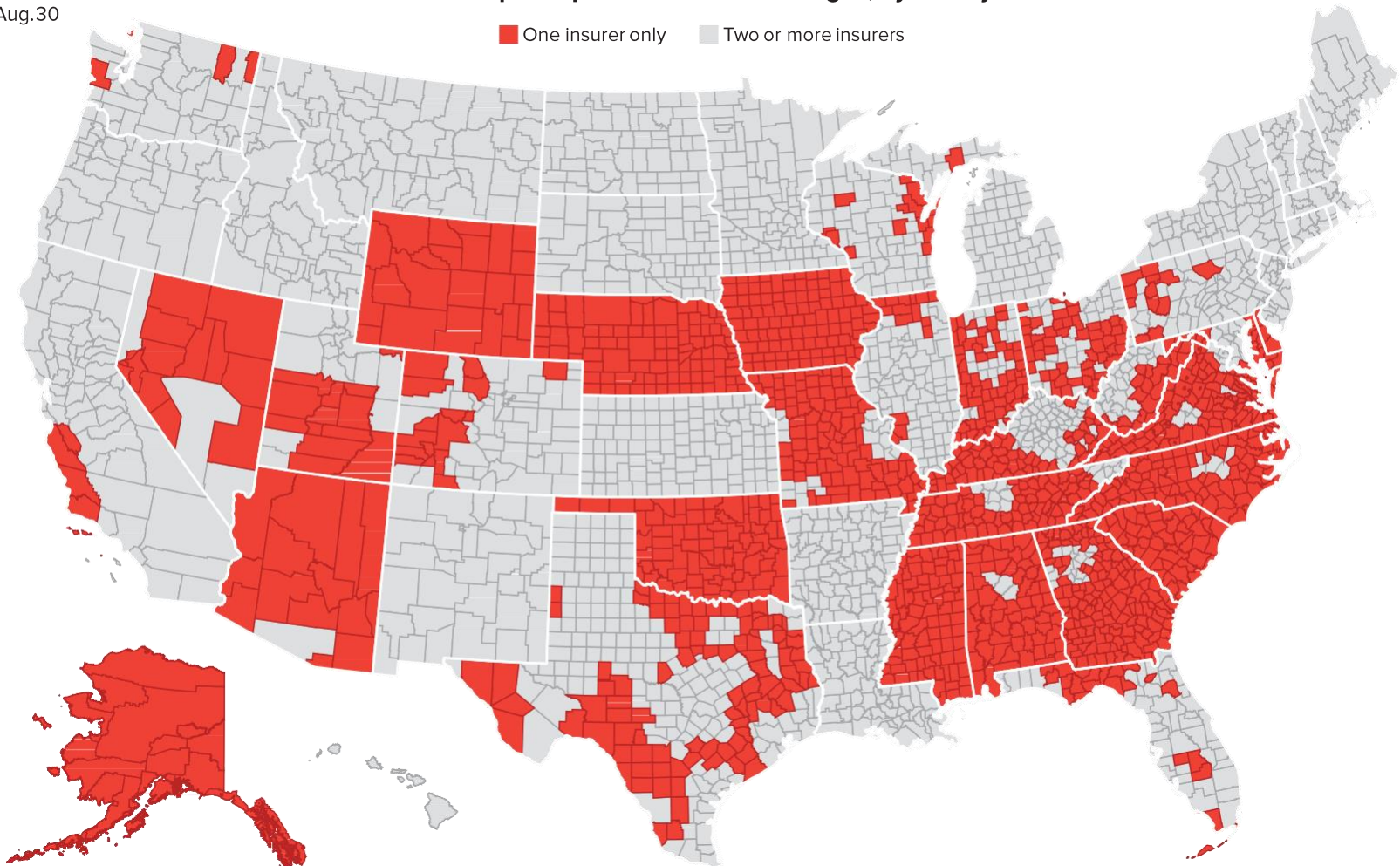
## Stabilization Efforts May Focus on Counties Lacking Competition on the Exchanges

During the HELP Committee's first hearing, several state insurance commissioners drew attention to the issue of competition on ACA exchanges, citing the existence of 1,340 counties — containing approximately 2.7 million enrollees — with just one choice of insurer. Kasich and Hickenlooper's bipartisan letter suggested several policies to increase participation in those counties, including a tax exemption for insurers in underserved counties and a short-term offer to let residents buy into the Federal Employee Benefit Program.

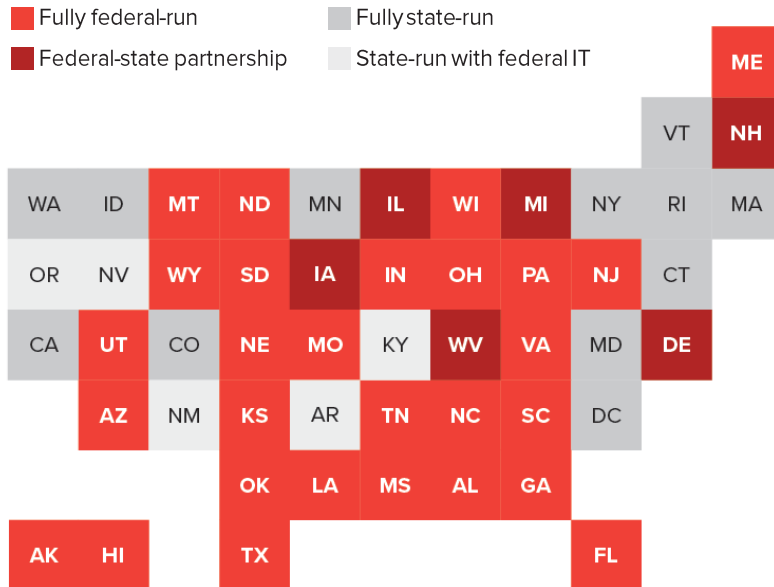
HHS estimates  
as of Aug.30

### Insurer participation on ACA exchanges, by county

■ One insurer only    ■ Two or more insurers



### How ACA exchanges are administered, by state



### Trump Administration Cuts ACA Outreach

In late August, the Trump administration announced significant cuts to ACA programs for enrollment outreach for the 39 states using the federal Healthcare.gov platform. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer accused the administration of “sabotage,” since outreach efforts are usually targeted at younger and healthier Americans who might otherwise forgo enrollment.

During the HELP hearing with the commissioners, Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) stated that a disruption in ACA outreach last January caused the federal platform to have 450,000 fewer pageviews per week.

### ACA outreach funding, in millions

