



More Health Care Implications -- Political Risk Grows

Summary

The outcome of the health care bill is, at this point, unknown, but in this note we list several implications for bank and financial stocks as well as the broader market in case the House defeats the bill. One big takeaway is that if the bill fails, the prospects for tax reform will decrease, which could also drag down the chances for making legislative changes to Dodd-Frank. Also, failure to pass the health care bill would increase chances of a government shutdown in April and a messy fight over raising the debt ceiling in the Fall.

□ **Part of the bank deregulation thesis remains intact** --

We think defeating the health care bill would negatively impact the chances of passing other parts of President Trump's economic agenda through Congress. However, we remind investors that despite the drama over health care, the president's regulatory agenda remains intact and we think the prospects are good that some financial regulations will be eased over time. For banks, we believe that, regardless of the outcome of the health care bill, regulators will be able to modify the Basel capital and liquidity rules, continue to ease the impact of the Comprehensive Capital Analysis and Review, and examine the complexity of the Volcker rule and some of the new mortgage rules, to name a few.

□ **Negative implication for banks and financials** --

Some people think that if health care fails, Republicans will turn their focus to tax reform. While that is clearly the backup plan, passing tax reform after a political loss on health care will be more difficult than people appreciate (and tax reform was already going to be a difficult task before the health care mess). First, we thought banks could be big winners in tax reform, so bank stocks would be among the big political losers if Congress cannot pass a tax reform bill. However, the impact on banks goes beyond the obvious conclusion about tax reform. The tax reform proposal was a possible vehicle for some legislative changes to Dodd-Frank. We have been skeptical that changes to Dodd-Frank could pass the Senate through regular order (60 votes). But we do think certain changes to Dodd-Frank (including changes to the CFPB's budget and raising the bank SIFI threshold) could pass the Senate through reconciliation (simple majority vote) as part of tax reform. **If tax reform's prospects are diminished, then the prospects for changes to Dodd-Frank also diminish.**

□ **Macro implications** --

Failure to pass a health care bill is a sign of Republicans' inability to govern, which we think increases political risk. In our view, failure on health care increases **the risk of a government**

shutdown in April. The federal government currently operates on a Continuing Resolution (CR), which expires on April 28 and Congress and the White House will need to agree on a spending bill in order to keep the government operating until the end of the fiscal year (September 30). We believe a government shutdown is unlikely but Republican discord suggests that passing spending bills might be difficult. Also, the defeat of the health care bill may signal that increasing the **debt ceiling** will be messier than expected. The debt ceiling was reached earlier this month but the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the Treasury Department can use extraordinary measures to prevent default until October or November before the debt ceiling must be increased. If the House Freedom Caucus holds out on spending bills and the debt ceiling then the administration may need to work with Democrats to pass these bills. This would give House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi leverage and complicate passing such legislation. We expect the spending bills and debt ceiling increase will ultimately pass but we think the risk of a government shutdown or political fight that spook the markets has increased.

□ Please see page 2 for concluding analysis.

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Glossary of Terms



- **What's next?** -- According to *Politico* and other media sources, the White House is pushing the House to vote on the health care bill today, Friday. We think there are three scenarios for the bill. First, the House votes today and surprisingly passes the bill. We view this as a positive for bank and financial stocks as it would mean the Trump agenda would be back on track. Second, the House votes today and defeats the bill. This would be a negative for banks and financials for the reasons established above. Third, the House delays the bill. We think this would also be a negative because any delay over the weekend would give the bill's opponents more time to voice their opposition to their representatives in Congress and make passing the bill even more difficult.



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