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More Than 1 Million Have Signed Petition Opposing Obama's Health-Care Plan

A petition opposing President Barack Obama's plan for a government-led overhaul of the nation's health care system has garnered over 1 million signatures since it launched May 25, something its sponsors say is proof that public opposition to Obama's plan is very real.

The petition, available online at www.freeourhealthcarenow.com, was created by the National Center for Policy Analysis (NCPA) and is being talked about by talk radio hosts on the Salem Radio Network. It surpassed 1 million signatures on Aug. 4, a week after a similar petition sponsored by the Democratic National Committee achieved the same milestone.

Bill Bennett, a nationally syndicated host on the Salem network, told CNSNews.com that the more his listeners heard about the petition, the more signatures it got, until it hit the 1 million mark.

"We just started talking about it, and the first couple weeks we had about 50- to 60,000 [signatures]. The interesting thing was the more we talked about it and the more Obama talked about his plan, the faster the signatures came."

Bennett said that he credits Obama with the petition's success, saying that the more the president explains his plan, the less the

public likes it and the more they sign the petition to voice their disgust.

"I've got to believe as good as our show is that it was Obama talking about it [Obama's plan] that got us more signatures. The more he talks about this thing, the worse it does, because people look at it and say 'wait a minute, hold on,'" Bennett added.

Bennett said that he has had an overwhelming response from medical professionals who are opposed to Obama's initiative; calling his show and expressing their displeasure live on the air.

"Because of the kind of show it is, early in the morning, we have a ton of professionals [call in]. We have a lot of people in the medical profession," he explained. "We must have had 60 doctors call and talk about what a disaster this would be and how much they resent it and the way the White House is talking about medicine and doctors."

Bennett explained that most opposition comes from people like himself who have watched the administration spend \$787 billion in stimulus and then move directly into a health care effort that people don't understand, saying that as more details emerge, the more people are turned off.

"For me, this guy has spent \$787 billion on a

stimulus, and now he wants to spend all this money on this plan, which we don't know the details of, and as you learn the details they're not the things we want. It's unbelievable. It's crazy. It's madness," Bennett added.

Bennett dismissed the idea put forth by Obama that opposition to his plan is nothing more than an orchestrated effort by conservative political opponents, arguing that the polls show the debate is now between Obama and the public, not Obama and Republicans.

"They want to call this [opposition] right-wing crazies who are defeating it," he said. "But, two things: one, the debate isn't between the Obama administration and a bunch of right-wingers. The debate is between the Obama administration and the American people, a lot of them elderly and not with any particular label.

"Second – and I guess you could call it a right-wing enclave – the Congressional Budget Office, not exactly a right-wing enclave, has nailed it with the numbers," Bennett added.

Bennett said of all the numbers being thrown around by both sides the one that best shows the protests are real is the number of people who are satisfied with their health care.

"We are seeing reckless spending, and I think the most important number of all,

probably, is 83, and that was 83 percent of the American people like their health care. You don't turn the whole system inside-out when 83 percent are satisfied."

Devon Herrick, senior fellow and health economist with NCPA, told CNSNews.com that his organization sponsored the petition as a way to let people voice opposition to Obama's overhaul plans, opposition which, he said, was too broad to have been staged.

"We created the petition to demand patient-friendly health care reform," Herrick explained. "It's an outreach, communications effort. There are a lot of people out there that are really concerned. We've got over 1 million signatures.

"That shows that there's pretty much a groundswell of people out there who are concerned about the direction the current proposals are taking," he added.

Herrick said the charge that anti-Obama protests are political mobs is "ridiculous," saying there was no organization in the country with the type of clout needed to spur the types of protests and questioning seen around the country.

"I really think what we're seeing is really essentially a grassroots effort," he said. "People themselves are getting involved. We created a petition, but it was the 1 million plus people who signed it that make it relevant.