



March 15, 2010

Conservative rallying cries spur phone call frenzy

Written by Jeff Simon

New York Rep. Dan Maffei's office has been inundated with phone calls from people opposed to Democratic health care reform calling from outside of his congressional district.

Washington (CNN) - As a vote on health care reform nears, Republican and conservative groups are attempting to defeat the bill by pressuring undecided and vulnerable Democrats to vote against the legislation.

Bob Adams, the executive director of the League of American Voters, tells CNN that his organization will place a \$547,000 television ad buy on Monday which will target 21 legislators. The group has spent \$330,000 running ads since February 27.

The group has listed on their Web site the name and phone number of every Democrat who voted against the House's health care bill in November, as well as those of the 21 Democrats who voted "yea" in November but may change their vote.

As the phone lines jam, the offices of some of those Democrats are expressing frustration that their constituents may be unable to reach out.

New York Rep. Dan Maffei's press secretary Abby Gardner told CNN that her office was averaging about 500 phone calls per day last

week, but that only 20 or so were from constituents in Maffei's district.

"The calls from the district are very mixed pro/for [and] against health care legislation," Gardner said. "The calls from outside of the district are exclusively against health care."

"Unfortunately the call volume makes it difficult for people to get through, and while I think the groups who really generate these calls consider jamming our phone lines a sign of strength and success, it really doesn't do anything to persuade the Rep.'s opinion on how to vote," Gardner said.

The National Republican Congressional Committee is running television ads and placing phone calls targeting constituents of those Democrats. An NRCC spokesperson said the group has dedicated tens of thousands of dollars to the effort.

Meanwhile, the National Center for Policy Analysis, a conservative think tank, and the Salem Radio Network, a Christian radio network, announced Monday that they have launched the "One Million Patriots" campaign which they say is "expected to generate a million e-mails from constituents to their congressional members, opposing ObamaCare."