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Two Separate Consecutive Votes: Off Ramp for Dems, Reps, and Trump to End Shutdown

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Both Democrats and Republicans in both houses of Congress are stuck -- blocked -- from doing anything to end the shutdown because of their positions. The gridlock has caused polling strong against Republicans on the shutdown, almost half of Americans "angry", with 40+ million people threatened with loss of food assistance, and Democrats unable to persuade Republicans to negotiate for the subsidies that will stop Americans from seeing an unaffordable double to quadruple premium hike, Medicaid hospitals closing, the loss of pre-existing coverage and children from ACA plans, and no more cheaper drugs for seniors.

With the persuasive polling to restore those health care elements and to continue food aid, BOTH sides need and want an "off ramp" to protect their interests in the congressional elections next year.

Republicans, in charge of both houses and the White House, are insisting on a vote to re-open the government before considering ACA subsidies. But they know that blocking the subsidies will cost a wave of votes in the elections and likely control.

The answer -- used before when insoluble controversies have surfaced -- is **TWO SEPARATE CONSECUTIVE** votes. First, as Republicans have demanded, to reopen the government, and second, as Democrats have demanded, to restore the ACA subsidies for 2026, 2027, AND 2028, so carrying to after the next presidential election, with negotiations after passage for ongoing decisions.

Both sides can claim a win, and the FULL American body politic on both sides would take a huge sigh of relief -- but the agreement must be real, with a clear statement of no rescission of the provisions.

President Trump is seeking a one-sided slam dunk, and the case could be made, for ending the undemocratic filibuster. However, there are people on both sides in the Senate who want the softener of the 60 vote margin, which they contend forces bipartisanship. Because one side or the other will win Senate control, neither really wants to give up the option of softening the other's legislation.

For now, the TWO CONSECUTIVE VOTES on what each side wants is the most logical approach to an immediate solution that protects Americans' food AND stops the horrific bleeding of excessive health insurance costs that would deny many their protection and lives. Another positive: both sides would gain in the polls and reverse the slide to the lowest-recent Republican, Democratic, and White House approvals

BECAUSE Americans would actually feel, for the first time in a long time, that their congress and political system work.

Robert Weiner is a former spokesman for the Clinton and Bush White Houses, Four-Star Gen. Barry McCaffrey, the US House Government Operations Committee, and was senior staff for Congressmen John Conyers, Charles Rangel, Claude Pepper, Ed Koch, and Sen. Ted Kennedy. He is winner of the National Press Club President's Award for his ongoing program recruiting young journalists to co-author opinion articles in major papers (1000+ articles in major papers www.weinerpublic.com/opeds).

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