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## **The affordable care act: the crossroads of medicine and American politics**

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On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010 President Obama signed into law the Affordable Care Act (ACA); arguably one of the most significant pieces of domestic legislation in the last 30 years. The ACA was the culmination of more than 40 years of efforts to reform the health care system in the US. Presidents from both parties tried but failed to pass reforms to a system which represents one-sixth of the US economy. In the seven years since its passage, there have been consistent efforts to change or repeal the act, none of which have been successful. How was it that the ACA made it through Congress to become law? The legislative handling the ACA was significantly different than previous or subsequent efforts, due in large part to the leadership of the House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. This paper examines the legislative history of the ACA and the key role of Speaker Nancy Pelosi in its passage.

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