

Barca pushes back against GOP concerns on Dem fundraising appeal

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Assembly Minority Leader Peter Barca pushed back on GOP concerns over a fundraising appeal Dems sent out during today's debate on opioid addiction bills, though he acknowledged the email probably "could've been better timed."

Dems today [proposed amendments on some of those bills](#) that would've ensured Wisconsin accepted the Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act. As the debate was going on, the Assembly Democratic Campaign Committee sent out a fundraising email on the topic.

The email led Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, to say it was "disgusting" that Dems are "using this as a political issue to raise money." Rep. John Nygren, R-Marinette, the author of the bills, said he was "appalled on behalf of" families affected by the opioid addiction.

But Barca, D-Kenosha, told reporters after today's session that the issue wasn't brought up "out of the blue," noting Dems have consistently pressed Republicans and Gov. Scott Walker to accept the expanded Medicaid funds.

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He said though he often signs off on ADCC appeals, he didn't see today's email before it went out. But he said ADCC didn't make a mistake in sending out the email "because the majority of the people in this state" believe the state should take the Medicaid expansion.

"I would say probably it was ill-advised in terms of going out today vs. tomorrow or Thursday, but those things happen," Barca said. "I don't think it's that egregious of an issue."

Barca also dismissed state GOP concerns that the feds would pull back on their promise of expanded Medicaid funds, noting the number of states that have accepted the expansion is now at 31 and increasingly includes GOP-led states.

That, Barca said, leads to having 62 U.S. senators — two from each state — that would refuse to accept a health care bill that repeals the Medicaid expansion.

“It’s remarkable to me that not one Republican [in Wisconsin] will break on this issue,” he said.