

Democratic Governors Association: Names Walker to “Chicken Caucus” for Hiding on Health Care

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Today, the DGA named Governor Scott Walker to the inaugural class of the “Chicken Caucus,” 15 gubernatorial candidates who refuse to take a position on the U.S. House health care bill.

The 15 inaugural members include three sitting governors and 12 candidates, from a total of 10 different states up for election in 2017-18.

Democratic and at least 15 Republican governors around the country have raised concerns about the impact of the House health care bill on states. Four Republican governors wrote a joint letter to Congressional leaders last week saying the bill “shifts significant new costs to states.”

While other Republican governors have spoken up for their states, these members of the “Chicken Caucus” have refused to take a stand or even give voters a clear yes-or-no answer on the bill.

Presenting the inaugural class of the Chicken Caucus:

WI: Gov. Scott Walker

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Headline: Scott Walker still not saying whether he supports Obamacare replacement. [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 3/14/17]

Gov. Scott Walker Refused to Endorse the Republican Health Care Bill. According to the Cap Times, “Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker expects ‘additional improvements’ to be made to House Republicans’ health care bill, but said it’s ‘important for them to move forward.’ [...] ‘To me, the more options people have, the better,’ he said. Walker stopped short of endorsing the bill, but said it is ‘moving in the right direction.’” [Capital Times, 3/21/17]

IL: Gov. Bruce Rauner

When Asked How He Recommends the State Delegation Vote on the AHCA, Gov. Bruce Rauner Refused to Answer. In March 2017, Rauner was asked by Bernie Schoenburg of the State Journal Register, “Governor, there’s supposed to be a vote in Washington this week by the House on the health care plan that Paul Ryan has crafted with some changes. It clearly would have—I think it block grants Medicaid—at least some state fiscal issues because of it. Are you recommending one way or another for how our delegation should vote on that plan?” Rauner responded, “What I won’t do—I know you’d like me to, but I won’t—I won’t negotiate in the press about what we’re advocating. I’m saying move slowly, move thoughtfully. We need to transition this in a careful way. We’ve got to minimize the hurt to people’s lives while we change the system.” [Office of Gov. Bruce Rauner, Governor Rauner Unveil Plan to Make Illinois Cyber Security, 45:00, 3/21/17]

MD: Gov. Larry Hogan

After Being Pressed by the Maryland Congressional Delegation, Gov. Larry Hogan Refused to Take a Position on the Republican Health Care Bill. According to the Associated Press, “Reps. Steny Hoyer, Elijah Cummings, John Sarbanes and Jamie Raskin gathered in front of the governor’s residence on Monday to criticize Hogan for not joining four GOP governors who’ve made their own proposal about how to overhaul Medicaid for low-income people. [...] Amelia Chasse, a Hogan spokeswoman, questioned what the four congressmen have done, except hold press conferences. She says the four Democrats are ‘grandstanding.’ She added that the four were ‘disregarding the governor’s direct appeal to them to work in a bipartisan manner to come up with responsible solutions for Maryland’ and that ‘they should tell their friends in the legislature to quit holding up our health secretary’s confirmation.’” [Associated Press, 3/20/17]

VA: Ed Gillespie & Sen. Frank Wagner

Ed Gillespie's Spokesperson Would Not Answer if Gillespie Supported the GOP Health Care Plan. According to Politico, "Campaign Pro surveyed a handful of Republican candidates who are either in or considering statewide bids on the House GOP health care bill. Here's what they had to say. Virginia Ed Gillespie's spokesman Matt Moran: 'Ed believes Obamacare is a disaster that should be completely repealed and replaced - and done so without punishing taxpayers in fiscally-responsible states like Virginia. Ed believes that Congress and the Trump Administration should work together to pass a conservative plan that fully repeals Obamacare and replaces it with healthcare system that saves taxpayer dollars, increases affordability and gives consumers the choices they deserve.'" [Politico, 3/9/17]

State Sen. Frank Wagner Said the GOP Health Care Bill "Needs a Lot of Work!" but Did Not Say Whether or Not He Would Support It. According to Wagner's Facebook page, "Good to see the Republicans are keeping their word but, the plan needs a lot of work! <http://www.foxnews.com/.../house-republicans-release-long-awa...>" [Facebook, FrankWagnerforGovernor, 3/6/17]

MI: LG Brian Calley & AG Bill Schuette

Lt. Gov. Brian Calley 'Reviewing' Bill, Declined to Take a Position. According to Politico Pro, "Campaign Pro surveyed a handful of Republican candidates who are either in or considering statewide bids on the House GOP health care bill. Here's what they had to say. [...] Michigan Lt. Gov Brian Calley's communications director Laura Biehl: 'Lt. Gov. Calley is reviewing the proposed federal health care reforms that were released this week. He hopes Michigan continues to have a seat at the table as the future of health care in our country is determined.'" [Politico Pro, 3/9/17]

A.G. Bill Schuette's Press Secretary Refused to Say Where Schuette Stood on the GOP Health Care Bill. According to Politico Pro, "Campaign Pro surveyed a handful of Republican candidates who are either in or considering statewide bids on the House GOP health care bill. Here's what they had to say. [...] Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette's press secretary Andrea Bitely: "We're reviewing the legislation." [Politico Pro, 3/9/17]

OH: Sec. of State Jon Husted, AG Mike DeWine & LG Mary Taylor

Sec. of State. Jon Husted: "I Can't Give You a Yes or No Answer on that Question." When asked at a Townhall at Cedarville University for a yes or no answer on

whether or not he opposes a program that takes people off Medicare, Husted said, "Well, I hate to disappoint you, but I can't give you a yes or no answer on that question." [Husted Townhall, Cedarville University, 3/14/17]

Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor's Spokesman: "The Lt. Governor Wants to Take Some More Time with this Issue Before She Comments." According to Politico, "Ohio Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor's Spokesman Michael Duchesne: 'The Lt. Governor wants to take some more time with this issue before she comments. She's a thoughtful, policy-oriented person and doesn't want to just throw out a sound bite. I'm sure this is going to be topical for awhile and we'd love to have another opportunity to weigh in on the future.'" [Politico, 3/9/17]

A.G. Mike DeWine Has Not Publicly Taken a Position on the Republican Bill, Despite Previous Calls for the Repeal of Obamacare. Attorney General Mike DeWine has not released a statement on the current House bill. From Mike DeWine For Ohio's campaign website: "REPEAL OBAMACARE! Obamacare is a bad law that is adding costs to healthcare, costing Ohio jobs, and causing Ohioans to lose their health insurance. Stand with me by signing the petition telling President Obama to repeal this law and replace it with common-sense healthcare reform." [Mike DeWine for Ohio, Website, accessed 1/19/17]

PA: Sen. Scott Wagner

PennLive: "Wagner Has Yet to Comment Publicly on the AHCA." According to PennLive, "Wagner has yet to publicly comment on the American Healthcare Act, the Obamacare replacement being pushed by House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wisc., and President Donald Trump. In a statement issued by his campaign last week, Wagner, of York County, said he supported 'the full repeal of Obamacare.' 'As a business owner, he has seen the dramatic increase in costs in the years since Obamacare was passed,' Wagner's campaign said in response to the attacks,' the campaign's statement, first published by PoliticsPA, read. At least three GOP members of Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation, U.S. Reps. Scott Perry, R-4th District; Glenn 'GT' Thompson, R-5th District, and Brian Fitzpatrick, R-8th District, have said they'll vote against the bill in its current form. A fourth Republican, 15th District Rep. Charlie Dent, has said he's on the fence about the bill." [PennLive, 3/21/17]

NJ: LG Kim Guadagno & Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli

Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno Refused to Take a Firm Position on the Republican Health Care Bill, Calling it “Just the Beginning of the Debate.” According to the Associated Press, “Republican candidate Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno said through a spokesman that the GOP bill is just the beginning of debate and the result must be a ‘better plan.’” [Associated Press, 3/15/17]

Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli Said the ACA was “Failed and Flawed” and Called for “New and Improved” Medicaid, but Would Not Take a Position on the Republican Health Care Bill. According to the Associated Press, “Republican candidate Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli called the ACA ‘failed and flawed’ and called for a ‘new and improved’ Medicaid. It’s unclear whether the congressional GOP plan meets that test.” [Associated Press, 3/15/17]

NM: Rep. Steve Pearce

Rep. Steve Pearce Spokesman Said he Was Still “Studying” the GOP Bill. According to the Associated Press, “Eyes were fixed this week on the state’s sole Republican on Capitol Hill, Rep. Steve Pearce, who said he was studying revisions to the GOP plan before the scheduled House vote. ‘Concerns still remain regarding affordability for consumers in New Mexico,’ Pearce spokeswoman Keeley Christensen said in an email.” [Associated Press, 3/22/17]

IA: LG Kim Reynolds

Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds Spokesman Declined to Comment on the Estimated Number of Iowans that Would Lose Coverage Under the Republican Health Care Bill. According to the Times Republican, “The Iowa Hospital Association, which represents 118 hospitals, has estimated through statistical data that between 200,000 and 250,000 Iowa residents will lose coverage. Kirk Norris, president and CEO of the association, said the bill would cause people to lose preventive care coverage, increasing emergency room visits and leading to more costs for hospitals. [...] Ben Hammes, spokesman for Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, the incoming governor, declined to comment on the association’s estimate.” [Times Republican, 3/20/17]