

# Kind says he's not rethinking decision to opt out of gubernatorial bid

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U.S. Rep. Ron Kind says he's not re-thinking his decision to opt out of a gubernatorial bid against Gov. Scott Walker next year.

Kind in March announced he wasn't going to seek the post, and he reaffirmed the decision in an Oct. 18 WisPolitics.com interview, saying his seniority in the House would help him "do a maximal amount of good for the folks here in Wisconsin," particularly as he pursues some of his legislative priorities, including a "more robust" trade agenda.

"It's an all-hands-on-deck moment in Washington given what's taken place there," the La Crosse Dem said.

Asked whether he thought any of the candidates currently in the Dem gov field could beat Walker, Kind responded: "Every one of them."

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Kind also took a shot at Walker, saying the gov's "taken our state here in a bad direction" because of his "war upon the public education system," his decision to reject the Medicaid expansion and lacking economic potential in the state.

"If you're a business looking from the outside in, you see this chaos going on in Wisconsin," he said. "It's not a very attractive place to hang up your shingle unless you get a \$3 billion incentive package over the next 25 years, which I think needs more scrutiny and more vetting than what took place."

State GOP spokesman Alec Zimmerman shot back, saying Kind “epitomizes Washington dysfunction, so it’s no surprise that he would launch baseless attacks on the positive results Gov. Walker has delivered for hard-working families.”

“It’s easy for Kind to criticize Wisconsin’s comeback from the cheap seats, but he dropped out of the governor’s race because even he knows that our state is thriving and moving in the right direction under Scott Walker,” he said.

On health care, Kind knocked President Trump for refusing to back a bipartisan effort to restore federal subsidies to health insurers after Trump said he’d stop the payments, saying the rejection leaves “no viable plan B.”

A White House spokeswoman Oct. 18 said while the proposal from Sens. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., and Patty Murray, D-Wash, is a “good step in the right direction,” Trump would need it to “go a little bit further to get on board,” according to national media reports.

Kind, though, said the response just creates “more confusion, more chaos, more disruption with the Affordable Care Act.”

“He’s got to realize he’s playing with real lives here,” he said.

Kind also called on Congress to “recognize what’s working in health care, fix what isn’t and focus on reducing health care costs.”

“That should be Congress’ sweet spot right now, rather than just endless debate about Obamacare and whether it’s working or not,” he said.

Asked about U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders’ single-payer health care plan, Kind said he didn’t think it’s “ready for prime time.”

Sanders, I-Vt., last month unveiled his “Medicare for All” plan, which has won the support of some in the state congressional delegation, including Baldwin and U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Town of Vermont.

But Kind took a more measured approach, saying there are still questions on how much it’ll cost, who will ultimately pay for it and what happens to the VA health care system, among other things.

Still, he said if Trump “continues to wreak havoc” on the health care system, he

expects more people might consider taking a look at alternatives like single-payer.

But in the meantime, Kind said, Dems' "biggest obstacle" to winning people over on single-payer would be the millions who receive health care coverage through their employers.

"I don't hear a lot of discontent out there about those plans," he said of the employer-based system.