

ABC for Health: Lame duck legislature seizes power to strip people of health coverage

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Madison, WI- In “Lame Duck” session, the Wisconsin Legislature seized Executive Branch power and approved two bills intended to strip some Wisconsinites of their health coverage. One bill codifies “work requirements” into the State’s BadgerCare Plus program, a measure that could exclude tens of thousands of low-income adults from their health coverage. Wisconsin’s own cost estimates show this plan will increase administrative and programmatic costs by the *hundreds of millions of dollars* at taxpayer expense.

The second bill seeks to further thwart Executive Branch discretion to maintain Wisconsin’s involvement in the ridiculous ACA “repeal and replace” lawsuit joined by Walker Administration. The pending lawsuit opposed by Governor-Elect Evers and Attorney General-Elect Kaul, could strip preexisting condition protections and the right to comprehensive health coverage from consumers purchasing private insurance.

“Separation of powers between the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches of government is a fundamental part of our governing process,” says Bobby Peterson, Public Interest Attorney at ABC for Health. “This Governor and Legislature forgot some basic high school civics. They ignored the results of an election, then rationalized reckless behavior to seize and maintain power.” Peterson continues, “As the voters showed in November, maintaining health coverage is a top priority for families all across our state. Yet, through a ‘Lame Duck’ process, Walker and his

Legislative cronies crammed through legislation in darkness that ignored the best interests and will of the people of Wisconsin.”

“This Legislature and Governor ignored our state motto – we could have moved **forward** to a new Administration with new ideas and opportunities to increase health coverage to more individuals. Instead,” says Peterson, “Walker will be remembered as the Governor that lit a match to the state constitution on his way out, subjecting the state to litigation and a constitutional crisis.” “We will also remember Walker as the Governor that left us policies that increased the number of uninsured adults, children, and families all while increasing medical debt and uncompensated care to the tune of *over a billion dollars* that we all pay in the form of increased costs,” says Peterson.

Peterson continues, “Sadly, Governor Walker’s failure to conduct a gracious transition of power to a new Administration will lead to litigation and pain for the people of Wisconsin. We can only hope a new Administration restores the proper balance to our government and expedites the likely litigation over the unprecedented seizure of power by the Legislature, endorsed by Governor Walker.”

Peterson concludes, “Despite these dark days, we remain hopeful that the Evers Administration can exercise appropriate Executive Branch power to permit new ideas and policies that promote comprehensive health care and coverage for patients regardless of income, race, or health status and include the people of Wisconsin in decisions that impact their own health and wellbeing and that of family and loved ones.”

ABC for Health, Inc., is a Wisconsin-based, nonprofit, public interest law firm dedicated to linking children and families, particularly those with special health care needs, to health care benefits and services. ABC for Health’s mission is to provide information, advocacy tools, legal services, and expert support needed to obtain, maintain, and finance health care coverage and services.