

Bill Kaplan: GOP, Trump and Walker running scared

Posted on Monday, Sep 17, 2018

The column below reflects the views of the author, and these opinions are neither endorsed nor supported by WisOpinion.com.

All signs point to voters across America, including Wisconsin, voting for change in November. Over 40 state legislative seats, including 2 Wisconsin Senate seats, have flipped from GOP to Democratic in regular and special elections since 2017. Moreover, Democrats flipped a U.S. Senate seat in Alabama and a U.S. House seat in Pennsylvania. And, Wisconsin voters flipped a state Supreme Court seat, formerly held by the hard-right. Polls for the GOP, Trump and Wisconsin point to a Democratic wave. The House looks winnable for Democrats, with a too-close-to-call Senate. Finally, Wisconsin GOP Governor Scott Walker's reelection has gone from "leans GOP" to "toss-up" (nonpartisan Cook Political Report and Larry Sabato's Crystal Ball).

So the GOP, Trump and Walker are running scared. All they have left is constant deception, while revving up division and fear. "Trump has accused Democrats of trying to 'raid', 'rob' or 'hurt' Medicare and Social Security, while suggesting he has made both 'stronger'. Neither claim is true" (New York Times). In addition, the Times reports that Medicare and Social Security (retirement) trust funds will run short earlier than predicted because of GOP tax cuts. Meanwhile, Trump continues to sabotage the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to make it harder for regular folks to enroll: "the administration shortened the open enrollment period (for private insurance) ... from three months to six weeks; cut 90 percent of the funding ... to advertise ...; and slashed the funding available to groups (e.g., Covering Wisconsin) that help people navigate the complex enrollment process" (Nicholas Bagley and Abbe Gluck, health law experts).

However, Walker has trumped Trump with a breathtakingly heartless lawsuit to have the entire ACA declared unconstitutional. Nearly 20 million Americans, including hundreds of thousands of Wisconsinites, would lose ACA health coverage. Consumer protections including coverage of preexisting conditions (852,000 Wisconsinites, Kaiser Family Foundation); no discrimination based on health status

or sex and no annual or life-time insurance limits would end. Worse, Walker is seeking an immediate permanent injunction to blow up the ACA.

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

Walker's campaign spokesperson, Brian Reisinger, said: "if something were to change" (think of the Massachusetts gas company calling last week's destruction of many houses by gas explosions an "inconvenience"), Walker would ask the state legislature to pass a bill to cover preexisting conditions. A disingenuous election year promise. Walker's fallback is a high-risk pool. When Wisconsin went down that road there were big problems: only 21,000 Wisconsinites were covered, leaving out hundreds of thousands, as well as high out-of-pocket costs and a 6-month waiting period. Cancer does not wait.

If the ACA is declared unconstitutional and enjoined, Walker's plan to replace ACA coverage and consumer protections boils down to Trump's short-term insurance scheme. Wisconsin Democratic Senator Tammy Baldwin wisely said: "Trump's junk insurance plans don't have to provide health care coverage for people with preexisting conditions" ... (or) "cover essential services like prescription drugs, emergency room visits and maternity care". It's time for checks and balances for Trump and long past time for Walker to go. Vote!

— Kaplan wrote a guest column from Washington, D.C. for the Wisconsin State Journal from 1995 - 2009.