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Rep. Taylor: JFC Republicans again reject paying less and expanding health care coverage for 79,000 families

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Rep. Chris Taylor, 608-266-5342

Instead, Republican legislators support short-term, election year gimmick

MADISON – Today, as President Trump continues to try to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Republican legislators in the Joint Finance Committee once again rejected Democratic efforts to expand health care coverage to 79,000 low-income Wisconsinites, many of whom are parents who Governor Walker and legislative Republicans kicked off BadgerCare.

The nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau determined that fully expanding Medicaid would actually cover more people, and result in substantial cost savings to the state. Specifically, covering 79,000 more Wisconsinites and taking millions of federal dollars would result in Wisconsin taxpayers SAVING $203 million. This money could be reinvested in offering more healthcare options, including a BadgerCare public option, in the ACA that could provide more choices and lower premiums for consumers.

JFC Democrats offered two amendments to Governor Walker's reinsurance plan: The first expanded Medicaid to cover more people for less, and invested the resulting savings in a responsible, adequately funded reinsurance program that protected consumers and provided more oversight for the state on premium rates and increased Medicaid reimbursement rates. The second used the Medicaid savings

from expansion to establish a public, BadgerCare option on the ACA exchange and increase MA reimbursement rates for providers. An analysis done by Citizen Action of Wisconsin showed that a public option on the ACA could lower premiums by 38% and provide individuals in county's with few ACA providers another affordable option.

Republicans voted against both options. Instead, they provided a short-term, election year band aid while continuing to advance policies that undermine the ACA. One provision of the bill directed OCI to continue to consider more high-deductible, minimal coverage plans that siphon off young, healthy people from the ACA exchange, increasing costs for those who remain.

"Wisconsin is an outlier in the upper Midwest, as every other state, both Republican and Democrat, has accepted millions of federal monies to expand access to affordable, accessible health care," said Rep. Chris Taylor (D-Madison). "Instead of continuing to attack the ACA and calling for its repeal, which Governor Walker has done for years, we need to get aggressive about effective ways to make the ACA more affordable and accessible, not tear it down."