



**Get the Facts**

Statement	Support
<p>Rebecca Cooke is the best candidate to beat Derrick Van Orden in November. She has lived the challenges facing our communities while Van Orden is trying to control your life with his extreme positions.</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>“GOP congressional candidates oppose virus mandates, impeachment,” Eric Lindquist, Leader Telegram, 8/7/2020</u></a></p> <p>Van Orden also said he opposes ending qualified immunity for officers as well as calls to defund the police. Instead, he pledged to work as hard as he can, if elected, to defund Planned Parenthood and stressed his belief that life begins at conception and that the number of abortions in the U.S. amounts to “genocide.”</p> <p><a href="#"><u>“GOP U.S. Rep. Derrick Van Orden calls on Wisconsin lawmakers to pass exceptions to abortion ban, consider 15-week law,” Molly Beck, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 4/14/2023</u></a></p> <p>In May 2020, as he was campaigning against then-Democratic U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, Van Orden said he opposed any access to abortions, including for victims of rape and incest.</p> <p>"You can't heal that evil (of rape) by adding more on it and killing someone — a human being that can only be described as the most innocent amongst us — is just compounding the evil of the rape of the incest," Van Orden said in a separate interview on WSAU in 2020.</p>
<p>She has earned the endorsements of unions, local leaders, farmers, small business owners, and national organizations including Defend the Vote, Tomorrow’s Jobs PAC, Blue Dog PAC, New Democratic Coalition Action Fund, and WelcomePAC</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>“Endorsements,” cookeforwisconsin.com, accessed 7/25/2024</u></a></p>
<p>Rebecca will take action to get results that reduce healthcare costs and improve access to care, and she’ll stand up for reproductive freedom and protect democracy.</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>“Priorities,” cookeforwisconsin.com, accessed 7/25/2024</u></a></p> <p>...</p> <p>Healing our Healthcare System</p> <p>I believe healthcare is a human right – and the biggest issue that we need to tackle as a nation. All Wisconsinites deserve access to quality, affordable healthcare – but how do we get there? Wisconsin residents need healthcare relief now. We can’t wait for a sweeping bill when people are struggling to have check-ups covered and to pay for monthly prescriptions. As a small business owner who relies on the exchange for my healthcare coverage, I know firsthand the limitations of our current system. Here’s how I think we start to fix it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expand Medicare to cover vision, dental and hearing – the very things that deteriorate as we age.</li> <li>● Address antitrust issues in the healthcare system that put the power in a few major corporations and provide consumers with little choice.</li> <li>● Take on prescription drug companies, ensuring Seniors can get the drugs they need at prices negotiated through Medicare and that drug companies can’t inflate their prices based on brand or speciality of the drug.</li> <li>● Work to improve the Affordable Care Act and healthcare exchange as it exists by providing more tax credits to lower premiums, creating more options on the exchange and simplifying the process to make obtaining health insurance less confusing.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annually lower the age that Seniors can start receiving Medicare benefits – each year expanding the number of Americans covered by Medicare.</li> </ul> <p>...</p> <p><b>Democracy Protection</b>  For generations my family has fought to protect our country and uphold democracy. Our democracy is fragile, and should not be taken for granted. Protecting the rights and freedoms promised in our constitution is more urgently needed now than ever in recent history.</p> <p>No voter should have to worry if their ballot will be counted or not on Election Day, or if they'll be able to easily access the polls. Obstructionists have worked for decades putting barriers up to make it harder for people to vote, including curtailing same day voter registration, limiting approved forms of voter identification, and reducing drop boxes for absentee ballots.</p> <p>We need to be making it easier, not harder, for eligible voters to participate in our democratic process by exercising their right to vote. I will always be a staunch defender of voting rights. In Congress, I will proudly support and work to pass the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finally enacting the Freedom to Vote Act and the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act which would restore key provisions of the Voting Rights Act, make voting more accessible, end partisan gerrymandering, bolster ethics rules for Members of Congress and eliminate dark money in politics.</li> <li>• End Citizens United and crack down on the prevalence of corporate dark money in our elections. Working class people like me face barriers running for office and it's left our country to be run by the ultra rich.</li> <li>• Banning members of Congress from trading stocks while <b>in office</b>.</li> </ul> <p>...</p> <p><b>Protecting Reproductive Health Freedoms</b>  As a college student, I relied on organizations like Planned Parenthood as my healthcare option for annual exams. I am a firm believer that every person should have the right to make the best decision for themselves about if, when, and how to start or grow a family, free from political or governmental interference. In Congress, I will always protect reproductive healthcare and the personal freedoms of all Wisconsinites. You can count on me to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make decisions based on scientific evidence rather than politics.</li> <li>• Unabashedly support the upholding of Roe vs. Wade.</li> <li>• Ensure our two regional Planned Parenthoods in western Wisconsin remain open, federally funded and that Planned Parenthood locations nationwide remain federally supported.</li> <li>• Advocate for ending the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits abortion coverage for individuals on Medicaid or Medicare.</li> <li>• Support federal programs that improve and increase access to family planning services.</li> </ul>
<p>Democratic Primary Voters need to read a biographic and credentialing message in the mail:</p>	
<p>Rebecca Cooke is a small business owner,</p>	<p><a href="#">"Meet Rebecca Cooke," CookeforWisconsin.com, accessed 7/10/2024</a></p> <p>...</p> <p>Rebecca went to work electing Democrats to public office around the country before coming home to Eau Claire and using her savings to open a small retail business – Red's Mercantile – that sourced goods from independent makers locally and throughout the country.</p>
<p>non-profit leader,</p>	<p><a href="#">"Rebecca Cooke believes her 'working class' values can flip 3rd Congressional District blue," Henry Redman, Wisconsin Examiner, 3/20/2024</a></p> <p>The previous owner of an Eau Claire small business, Cooke is from a dairy farming family. She runs a nonprofit aimed at helping women-owned businesses in a number of Wisconsin counties and even as the campaign heats up, continues to waitress three nights a week.</p>

<p>and was appointed by Governor Evers to the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Board, where she was co-chair of the Entrepreneurship &amp; Innovation committee.</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>“WEDC names members of new Entrepreneurship and Innovation Committee,” The Daily Reporter, 9/11/2019</u></a></p> <p>Lisa Mauer, the chair of the board of directors of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp., has named 15 members to the new Entrepreneurship and Innovation Committee, which will meet later this month.</p> <p>The WEDC board created the committee in response to a request from Gov. Tony Evers earlier this year. The governor noted at the time that Wisconsin lags other states in small business creation. He said the committee would compliment WEDC’s existing programs to assist entrepreneurs.</p> <p>The committee will be co-chaired by Joe Kirgues, co-founder of Milwaukee-based Gener8tor, and Rebecca Cooke, owner of Eau Claire-based Red’s Mercantile and founder of the Red Letter Grant. Both are also members of the WEDC Board of Directors.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>“Eau Clair business owner Rebecca Cooke launches run for 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District seat,” Wisconsin Public Radio, 10/13/2021</u></a></p> <p>Eau Claire business owner Rebecca Cooke has joined the highly competitive race for Wisconsin’s 3rd Congressional District, hoping to succeed retiring Democratic U.S. Rep. Ron Kind in the western Wisconsin seat.</p> <p>Cooke is secretary of Wisconsin Economic Development Corp., the state’s economic development agency board. She was appointed by Democratic Gov. Tony Evers in 2019.</p>
<p>She started her own small business, Red’s Mercantile, a made in America retail business, which taught her how to balance a budget and make payroll every week.</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>“Meet Rebecca Cooke,” CookeforWisconsin.com, accessed 7/10/2024</u></a></p> <p>...</p> <p>Rebecca went to work electing Democrats to public office around the country before coming home to Eau Claire and using her savings to open a small retail business – Red’s Mercantile – that sourced goods from independent makers locally and throughout the country. Looking to help other local entrepreneurs she founded the Red Letter Grant in 2016, a nonprofit that supports and empowers female entrepreneurs by providing start-up capital, technical assistance and authentic networking opportunities throughout a ten county region of western Wisconsin. Within five years, the organization has helped launch 23 women-owned businesses.</p>
<p>Rebecca also founded the Red Letter Grant, a non-profit, which has helped over 50 Wisconsin women start their own small businesses and create jobs. She will use her depth of experience in Congress to deliver real results for Western Wisconsin.</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>“Meet Rebecca Cooke,” CookeforWisconsin.com, accessed 7/10/2024</u></a></p> <p>...</p> <p>Rebecca went to work electing Democrats to public office around the country before coming home to Eau Claire and using her savings to open a small retail business – Red’s Mercantile – that sourced goods from independent makers locally and throughout the country. Looking to help other local entrepreneurs she founded the Red Letter Grant in 2016, a nonprofit that supports and empowers female entrepreneurs by providing start-up capital, technical assistance and authentic networking opportunities throughout a ten county region of western Wisconsin. Within five years, the organization has helped launch 23 women-owned businesses.</p>
<p>In addition, Democratic Primary Voters who watch streaming and YouTube need to see and hear in a factual matter:</p>	
<p>While serving in the State Assembly, Shankland was the only Democrat to vote in committee with Republicans to pass a bill to block the Governor from expanding Badgercare without approval from the Republican legislature,</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Senate Bill 770, Passage as Amended, Joint Committee on Finance, 2/13/2018</u></a></p> <p>Shankland: Aye</p> <p><a href="#"><u>“Gov. Walker’s plan to hold down Obamacare premiums passes without a way to pay for it,” Jason Stein, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 2/13/2018</u></a></p> <p>Lawmakers Tuesday approved <a href="#"><u>Gov. Scott Walker’s plan</u></a> to hold down Obamacare premiums but left for another day how to pay for the \$200 million proposal.</p>

	<p>The Joint Finance Committee also ordered the Walker administration to study bringing back Wisconsin's high-risk insurance pool, which was phased out after the passage of the federal Affordable Care Act.</p> <p>Conservatives in Congress and the Legislature have sought to bring back programs like Wisconsin's former Health Insurance Risk-Sharing Plan, known as HIRSP, as a way to jettison the current ACA requirement that insurers cover consumers with expensive pre-existing conditions.</p> <p>On near party-line votes, Republicans on the budget committee amended and approved <a href="#">Senate Bill 770</a>, which calls for using a mix of federal and state dollars to hold down premium increases for insurance sold directly to individuals and families under the Affordable Care Act. Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) voted with Democrats against the amendment but then with Republicans in approving the bill.</p> <p>...</p> <p><b>Republicans also slipped into the bill a provision that would explicitly prevent Wisconsin's governor from expanding Medicaid without lawmakers' approval. Democrats said that amounted to an admission that Republicans are worried about Walker's re-election, since he firmly opposes that Medicaid expansion.</b></p> <p><a href="#">SB 770, Vote #271, 02/20/2018</a> Shankland: Aye</p> <p><a href="#">"2017 Wisconsin Act 138," Wisconsin Legislative Council Act Memo, 03/14/2018</a> Act 138 also provides that DHS may not expand MA program eligibility to newly eligible individuals as provided under the ACA unless the Legislature has passed legislation to allow the expansion and that legislation is in effect.<sup>1</sup></p>
denying coverage to almost 90,000 Wisconsinites	<p><a href="#">Senate Bill 770, Passage as Amended, Joint Committee on Finance, 2/13/2018</a> Shankland: Aye</p> <p><a href="#">"Gov. Walker's plan to hold down Obamacare premiums passes without a way to pay for it," Jason Stein, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 2/13/2018</a> Lawmakers Tuesday approved <a href="#">Gov. Scott Walker's plan</a> to hold down Obamacare premiums but left for another day how to pay for the \$200 million proposal. The Joint Finance Committee also ordered the Walker administration to study bringing back Wisconsin's high-risk insurance pool, which was phased out after the passage of the federal Affordable Care Act.</p> <p>Conservatives in Congress and the Legislature have sought to bring back programs like Wisconsin's former Health Insurance Risk-Sharing Plan, known as HIRSP, as a way to jettison the current ACA requirement that insurers cover consumers with expensive pre-existing conditions.</p> <p>On near party-line votes, Republicans on the budget committee amended and approved <a href="#">Senate Bill 770</a>, which calls for using a mix of federal and state dollars to hold down premium increases for insurance sold directly to individuals and families under the Affordable Care Act. Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) voted with Democrats against the amendment but then with Republicans in approving the bill.</p> <p>...</p> <p><b>Republicans also slipped into the bill a provision that would explicitly prevent Wisconsin's governor from expanding Medicaid without lawmakers' approval. Democrats said that amounted to an admission that Republicans are worried about Walker's re-election, since he firmly opposes that Medicaid expansion.</b></p> <p><a href="#">SB 770, Vote #271, 02/20/2018</a></p>

<sup>1</sup> ["2017 Wisconsin Act 138-Wisconsin Healthcare Stability Plan," Wisconsin Legislative Council Act Memo, 3/14/2018](#)

	<p>Shankland: Aye</p> <p><a href="#">“2017 Wisconsin Act 138,” Wisconsin Legislative Council Act Memo, 03/14/2018</a></p> <p>Act 138 also provides that DHS may not expand MA program eligibility to newly eligible individuals as provided under the ACA unless the Legislature has passed legislation to allow the expansion and that legislation is in effect.<sup>2</sup></p> <p><a href="#">“GOVERNOR EVERS' 2023-25 BIENNIAL BUDGET,” Wisconsin Department of Health Services</a></p> <p>As of March 2023, Wisconsin is one of only 10 states that have not chosen to expand their Medicaid programs. States that have expanded Medicaid have experienced positive outcomes as more people gain access to needed treatment and care, hospitals stay open, and jobs and the economy grow. Expanding access to quality health care services ensures everyone can receive preventive health services and can adequately treat illness or emergencies. <b>Medicaid expansion will expand coverage access to an estimated 89,700 additional people in Wisconsin.</b> It is expected to generate \$1.6 billion in savings due to enhanced federal funds.</p>
<p>and stopped money from being spent to lower the cost of healthcare</p>	<p><a href="#">Senate Bill 770, Passage as Amended, Joint Committee on Finance, 2/13/2018</a></p> <p>Shankland: Aye</p> <p><a href="#">“Gov. Walker’s plan to hold down Obamacare premiums passes without a way to pay for it.” Jason Stein, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 2/13/2018</a></p> <p>Lawmakers Tuesday approved <a href="#">Gov. Scott Walker's plan</a> to hold down Obamacare premiums but left for another day how to pay for the \$200 million proposal. The Joint Finance Committee also ordered the Walker administration to study bringing back Wisconsin's high-risk insurance pool, which was phased out after the passage of the federal Affordable Care Act.</p> <p>Conservatives in Congress and the Legislature have sought to bring back programs like Wisconsin's former Health Insurance Risk-Sharing Plan, known as HIRSP, as a way to jettison the current ACA requirement that insurers cover consumers with expensive pre-existing conditions.</p> <p>On near party-line votes, Republicans on the budget committee amended and approved <a href="#">Senate Bill 770</a>, which calls for using a mix of federal and state dollars to hold down premium increases for insurance sold directly to individuals and families under the Affordable Care Act. Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) voted with Democrats against the amendment but then with Republicans in approving the bill.</p> <p>...</p> <p><b>Republicans also slipped into the bill a provision that would explicitly prevent Wisconsin's governor from expanding Medicaid without lawmakers' approval. Democrats said that amounted to an admission that Republicans are worried about Walker's re-election, since he firmly opposes that Medicaid expansion.</b></p> <p><a href="#">SB 770, Vote #271, 02/20/2018</a></p> <p>Shankland: Aye</p> <p><a href="#">“2017 Wisconsin Act 138,” Wisconsin Legislative Council Act Memo, 03/14/2018</a></p> <p>Act 138 also provides that DHS may not expand MA program eligibility to newly eligible individuals as provided under the ACA unless the Legislature has passed legislation to allow the expansion and that legislation is in effect.<sup>3</sup></p> <p><a href="#">“Protect Our Care Wisconsin: What expanding Medicaid would mean for Wisconsin.” Press Release: Protect Our Care, 1/3/2023</a></p>

<sup>2</sup> [“2017 Wisconsin Act 138-Wisconsin Healthcare Stability Plan,” Wisconsin Legislative Council Act Memo, 3/14/2018](#)

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Today, Governor Tony Evers once again called for the state to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. For more than a decade, Wisconsin Republicans have refused to do so, ensuring Wisconsin would pay more to cover fewer people through the popular BadgerCare program.

Medicaid has been proven to increase [access](#) to care, improve [financial security](#), and produce better health [outcomes](#). Today, more than 1 million Wisconsinites receive their coverage through [Medicaid](#), a pillar of the American health care system.

Medicaid expansion is essential to ensure every American has quality, affordable health coverage. Despite the overwhelming benefits of Medicaid expansion, Republicans in Wisconsin have spent years undermining the ACA and its expansion of Medicaid at every turn, blocking 87,000 from coverage. Yet the program has become increasingly popular among conservative voters. [75 percent](#) of Americans have a favorable view toward the Medicaid program, and [61 percent](#) of Americans in non-expansion states favor expansion.

Research confirms that Medicaid expansion saves lives and [drastically reduces](#) racial health disparities. States that expanded their Medicaid programs saw a [51 percent](#) reduction in the gap between uninsured white and Black adults after expansion, and a [45 percent](#) reduction between white and Hispanic adults. Medicaid has also served as a lifeline during the pandemic, with research showing expansion states were [better positioned](#) to handle the economic fallout from COVID-19. However you approach it, Medicaid is an essential component of American life and more important than ever.

A Closer Look At Medicaid Across Wisconsin:

**87,000 Wisconsinites Would Gain Coverage If The State Expanded Medicaid.** The ACA provides generous funding to states to expand their Medicaid coverage and provide quality coverage to millions of Americans, but Republican leaders in Wisconsin have refused expansion. If Wisconsin had accepted Medicaid expansion, 87,000 Wisconsinites [would be covered](#) by Medicaid. Research confirms that Medicaid expansion increases [access](#) to care, improves [financial security](#), and leads to better health [outcomes](#).

**Medicaid Expansion In Wisconsin Would Save Lives.** Between 2014 and 2017, Wisconsin's rejection of Medicaid expansion [cost](#) an estimated 576 lives in adults aged 55 to 64. States that accepted expansion saved the lives of more than [19,000](#) older adults over the same period.

**Reduced Racial Disparities In Coverage And Access.** Increasing Medicaid access is the single most important action available to expand coverage and reduce racial inequities in the American health care system. The ACA led to historic reductions in racial disparities in access to health care, but racial gaps in insurance coverage [narrowed the most](#) in states that adopted Medicaid expansion. States that expanded their Medicaid programs saw a [51 percent](#) reduction in the gap between uninsured white and Black adults after expansion, and a [45 percent](#) reduction between white and Hispanic adults. [60 percent](#) of Americans who would gain coverage if the remaining 12 hold out states expanded Medicaid are people of color.

**Reduced Medical Debt.** Access to Medicaid means access to high quality coverage and extremely low cost sharing, without the premiums. As a result, Medicaid eliminates the types of medical costs that can lead to unpaid bills and medical debt. Over the past decade, research has shown the gap in medical debt between Medicaid expansion and holdout states has grown approximately [30 percent](#). In 2020, Americans living in holdout states carried an average of [\\$375](#) more in medical debt than their counterparts in expansion states.

	<p><b>Medicaid Expansion Reduces Uncompensated Care Costs.</b> Through lower premiums and expanded Medicaid, there has been a profound reduction in uncompensated care costs, which are often the direct result of individuals who are un-or-underinsured. Compared to 2013, hospitals' uncompensated care costs decreased by more than <a href="#">\$14 billion</a> in 2017, or 26 percent. Medicaid expansion plays a large role in reducing uncompensated care costs. When Louisiana expanded Medicaid in 2016, it experienced a <a href="#">33 percent reduction</a> in uncompensated care costs as a share of total operating expenses among hospitals, with a 55 percent reduction for rural hospitals.</p>
<p>and contributed to the closure of hospitals.</p>	<p><a href="#">Senate Bill 770, Passage as Amended, Joint Committee on Finance, 2/13/2018</a> Shankland: Aye</p> <p><a href="#">“Gov. Walker’s plan to hold down Obamacare premiums passes without a way to pay for it,” Jason Stein, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 2/13/2018</a> Lawmakers Tuesday approved <a href="#">Gov. Scott Walker's plan</a> to hold down Obamacare premiums but left for another day how to pay for the \$200 million proposal. The Joint Finance Committee also ordered the Walker administration to study bringing back Wisconsin's high-risk insurance pool, which was phased out after the passage of the federal Affordable Care Act.</p> <p>Conservatives in Congress and the Legislature have sought to bring back programs like Wisconsin's former Health Insurance Risk-Sharing Plan, known as HIRSP, as a way to jettison the current ACA requirement that insurers cover consumers with expensive pre-existing conditions.</p> <p>On near party-line votes, Republicans on the budget committee amended and approved <a href="#">Senate Bill 770</a>, which calls for using a mix of federal and state dollars to hold down premium increases for insurance sold directly to individuals and families under the Affordable Care Act. Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) voted with Democrats against the amendment but then with Republicans in approving the bill.</p> <p>...</p> <p><b>Republicans also slipped into the bill a provision that would explicitly prevent Wisconsin's governor from expanding Medicaid without lawmakers' approval. Democrats said that amounted to an admission that Republicans are worried about Walker's re-election, since he firmly opposes that Medicaid expansion.</b></p> <p><a href="#">SB 770, Vote #271, 02/20/2018</a> Shankland: Aye</p> <p><a href="#">“2017 Wisconsin Act 138,” Wisconsin Legislative Council Act Memo, 03/14/2018</a> Act 138 also provides that DHS may not expand MA program eligibility to newly eligible individuals as provided under the ACA unless the Legislature has passed legislation to allow the expansion and that legislation is in effect.<sup>4</sup></p> <p><a href="#">“Hospitals in states that expanded Medicaid less likely to close.” John Daley, NPR, 1/8/2018</a> The expansion of Medicaid helps rural hospitals stay afloat in states like Colorado, which added 400,000 people to the health insurance program under the Affordable Care Act.</p> <p>Hospitals in states that expanded Medicaid were about 6 times less likely to close than hospitals in non-expansion states, according to a study by researchers at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus.</p> <p>The study was <a href="#">published Monday</a> in the January edition of the journal <i>Health Affairs</i>.</p>

<sup>4</sup> [“2017 Wisconsin Act 138-Wisconsin Healthcare Stability Plan.” Wisconsin Legislative Council Act Memo, 3/14/2018](#)

Colorado was one of [32 states](#) to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. That cut the state's uninsured rate in half. The biggest group that got coverage was childless adults.

Richard Lindrooth, a professor at the Colorado School of Public Health and lead author of the study, says hospitals saw more people showing up to hospitals with that insurance — so Medicaid payments increased. That helped the hospitals' bottom line.

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Lindrooth says he and his colleagues hypothesized that hospitals in expansion states stood a better chance of remaining financially viable. So they examined national hospital data and local market conditions.

They compared four years before the Affordable Care Act went into effect (2008-2012) with years right after the launch of the ACA (2015-2016). Lindrooth says the results were noteworthy, especially for rural hospitals, which often struggle to stay open.

"Rural hospitals tend to be in more of a financially tenuous position, even prior to the Medicaid expansions," Lindrooth says. "We found that really about half of the closures that did occur in non-expansion states could have been averted through the expansion."

With more insured people in expansion states, hospitals made more money and provided less free care. "So overall their margins improved," he says. Rural hospitals in non-expansion states didn't have that advantage.

Rural health leaders said the study confirmed what they've seen on the ground. Jason Cleckler, CEO of [Delta Memorial Hospital](#) in Delta, Colo., in the rural western part of the state, said the Medicaid expansion helped his hospital's finances. He compared the numbers in 2011 with 2016, after expansion. The hospital's Medicaid population grew from 10 percent to 20 percent, and the hospital was left with less uncompensated care. It saved the hospital more than \$3 million.

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Brock Slabach, senior vice president of the National Rural Health Association, says the study correlates with data the group has reviewed. "If state legislatures and Congress want to cure the rural hospital closure problem, expanding Medicaid and not block-granting this important program would be the answer," he says.

**["Evers says Medicaid expansion could help save rural, struggling hospitals." Chris Vetter, Leader-Telegram. 1/25/2024](#)**

Gov. Tony Evers reiterated his push for the Republican-led Legislature to approve Medicaid expansion dollars on Wednesday, saying it could help save struggling, rural hospitals.

Only 10 states nationwide haven't accepted Medicaid expansion. According to the American Hospital Association, states that opted against Medicaid expansion accounted for nearly three-fourths of rural hospital closures between 2010 and 2021.

At a stop at UW-Eau Claire on Wednesday, Evers said that the lack of those dollars was likely a factor in the decision by Hospital Sisters Health System to close Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire and St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls, along with Prevea Health locations in the Chippewa Valley, will close by April.

"I believe that would help them," Evers said of Medicaid expansion.

Evers was traveling with Kirsten Johnson, secretary for the Department of Health Services, and she agreed that the Medicaid expansion would help keep other rural hospitals in the state from closing.



	<p>“I think Medicaid expansion would help these rural hospitals,” Johnson said. “We’d be able to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates.”</p> <p>Evers said people in northwest Wisconsin deserve quality health care options and he is willing to work with providers who are in the area to ensure they are able to stay open. “We do believe Medicaid will play a role in that,” he said.</p> <p><a href="#">“Wisconsin hospitals close their doors,” Ron Southwick, Chief Health Executive, 3/23/2024</a></p> <p>In Wisconsin, two hospitals that have served their communities since the latter part of the 19th century have closed their doors for good.</p> <p>Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire and St. Joseph’s Hospital in Chippewa Falls both officially closed Friday morning. The Hospital Sisters Health System, which had operated the two hospitals, <a href="#">announced plans to close the facilities</a> in January.</p> <p>Prevea Health, a physician network providing primary and specialty care, is also closing its locations in western Wisconsin’s Chippewa Valley in April. More than 1,400 people are losing jobs, including 1,082 HSHS employees and 325 Prevea physicians and staffers.</p> <p>Eric Borgerding, president and chief executive officer of the Wisconsin Hospital Association, told <i>Chief Healthcare Executive</i>® that the closure of the hospitals is a serious blow to those communities.</p> <p>“When you have not one but two hospitals close in a community, it’s not just a shock, because the inpatient capacity disappears over the course of a couple of months,” Borgerding said in an interview. “It’s also everything else that those hospitals were supporting, which is substantial, and which is an increasing challenge to continue to do.”</p> <p><a href="#">Elected officials in Wisconsin</a>, including Gov. Tony Evers and U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wisc., have expressed their disappointment about the closure of the hospitals. Local officials said the closures will make it harder for patients to get access to the care they need.</p> <p>Sacred Heart Hospital, which had 192 beds, began serving Eau Claire in 1889. St. Joseph’s Hospital, with about 100 beds, began operating in Chippewa Falls in 1885.</p>
<p>As a state assemblymember, Shankland has consistently voted with Republicans,</p>	<p>See below</p>
<p>Making it harder to expand Badgercare,</p>	<p><a href="#">Senate Bill 770, Passage as Amended, Joint Committee on Finance, 2/13/2018</a></p> <p>Shankland: Aye</p> <p><a href="#">“Gov. Walker’s plan to hold down Obamacare premiums passes without a way to pay for it,” Jason Stein, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 2/13/2018</a></p> <p>Lawmakers Tuesday approved <a href="#">Gov. Scott Walker’s plan</a> to hold down Obamacare premiums but left for another day how to pay for the \$200 million proposal. The Joint Finance Committee also ordered the Walker administration to study bringing back Wisconsin’s high-risk insurance pool, which was phased out after the passage of the federal Affordable Care Act.</p> <p>Conservatives in Congress and the Legislature have sought to bring back programs like Wisconsin’s former Health Insurance Risk-Sharing Plan, known as HIRSP, as a way to jettison the current ACA requirement that insurers cover consumers with expensive pre-existing conditions.</p> <p>On near party-line votes, Republicans on the budget committee amended and approved <a href="#">Senate Bill 770</a>, which calls for using a mix of federal and state dollars to</p>

	<p>hold down premium increases for insurance sold directly to individuals and families under the Affordable Care Act. Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) voted with Democrats against the amendment but then with Republicans in approving the bill.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Republicans also slipped into the bill a provision that would explicitly prevent Wisconsin's governor from expanding Medicaid without lawmakers' approval. Democrats said that amounted to an admission that Republicans are worried about Walker's re-election, since he firmly opposes that Medicaid expansion.</p> <p><a href="#">SB 770, Vote #271, 02/20/2018</a> Shankland: Aye</p> <p><a href="#">"2017 Wisconsin Act 138," Wisconsin Legislative Council Act Memo, 03/14/2018</a> Act 138 also provides that DHS may not expand MA program eligibility to newly eligible individuals as provided under the ACA unless the Legislature has passed legislation to allow the expansion and that legislation is in effect.<sup>5</sup></p> <p><a href="#">"Status of state Medicaid expansion decisions: interactive map," KFF, 5/8/2024</a> The Affordable Care Act's (ACA) Medicaid expansion expanded Medicaid coverage to nearly all adults with incomes up to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level (\$20,783 for an individual in <a href="#">2024</a>) and provided states with an enhanced federal matching rate (FMAP) for their expansion populations.</p> <p>To date, 41 states (including DC) have adopted the Medicaid expansion and 10 states have not adopted the expansion. Current status for each state is based on KFF tracking and analysis of state expansion activity.</p> <p>...</p> <p>STATES THAT HAVE NOT ADOPTED EXPANSION</p> <p>..</p> <p>Wisconsin</p> <p>...</p> <p>In March 2023, Democratic Governor Tony Evers introduced his biennial budget proposal for State Fiscal Years 2023-2025 which included allocations for Medicaid expansion and accounts for additional federal Medicaid matching funds due to the <a href="#">American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)</a> incentive for states to newly adopt expansion. However, the Wisconsin Legislature's Joint Finance Committee voted to remove Medicaid expansion funding from the budget proposal in May 2023. <b>Evers has proposed expansion through previous budgets and legislation since the start of his term in 2019, though none have been passed by the Republican-controlled legislature.</b></p>
<p>voting for tax cuts for the wealthy,</p>	<p><a href="#">2023 Assembly Bill Vote 161, AB 1021-Passage, 2/13/2024</a> Shankland: Aye</p> <p><a href="#">"Child care tax credit most likely to survive among tax bills GOP sent to Evers," Erik Gunn, Wisconsin Examiner, 2/22/2024</a> A \$2.1 billion tax cut package that Republicans in the Legislature introduced after Gov. Tony Evers vetoed previous tax cut proposals will now go to Evers for his signature, another rejection, or a little of both.</p> <p>The package includes four separate bills that passed the state Senate on Tuesday after passing the Assembly <a href="#">a week ago</a>. Wednesday morning Emilee Fannon, Capitol correspondent for Milwaukee TV station WDJT Channel 58, <a href="#">tweeted</a> that Evers said he would sign "some, but not all" of the bills but didn't elaborate.</p> <p>...</p>

<sup>5</sup> ["2017 Wisconsin Act 138-Wisconsin Healthcare Stability Plan," Wisconsin Legislative Council Act Memo, 3/14/2018](#)

The Senate voted Tuesday to concur with the Assembly on the three other bills in the GOP package:

- [AB-1020](#) passed 22-10 on party lines. The measure raises the income ceiling on the second-lowest state income tax rate of 4.4% to \$112,500 for single filers and \$150,000 for married couples filing jointly.
- [AB-1021](#) passed by a vote of 23-9. It exempts from the state income tax retirement income up to \$75,000 for single filers and \$150,000 for joint filers.

...

Wisconsin currently waives taxes on the first \$5,000 of retirement pay for incomes of \$15,000 or less for individuals and \$30,000 or less for couples. The state also doesn't tax Social Security payments.

Proponents of the bill to waive state taxes on retirement income up to \$150,000 for people 65 or older suggested it could persuade many who split their time between Wisconsin and states with lower income taxes, or none at all, to maintain their domicile up north instead of elsewhere.

...

**Sen. Tim Carpenter (D-Milwaukee) argued that the bill's income ceilings are higher than they needed to be. "A couple making \$150,000?" Carpenter said. "You know how many families can live on that? And you want to give them tax cuts."**

He urged Senate Republicans to consider a compromise, reducing the cap for single filers to \$50,000 and for couples to \$75,000. Sen. Bob Wirth (D-Somers) and other Democrats introduced an amendment that would make that change, which was rejected on a 22-10 party-line vote.

**["Wisconsin Assembly passes a \\$2 billion tax cut package. But will Evers sign it?" Todd Richmond, Associated Press, 2/14/2024](#)**

Wisconsin Republicans moved closer Tuesday to passing their [third attempt at a major tax cut](#) this session, pushing a package of cuts through the Assembly and on to the Senate.

Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu supports the \$2 billion plan, but it's unclear where Democratic Gov. Tony Evers stands on it. Evers used his partial veto powers in July to reduce a \$3.5 billion income tax cut that Republicans inserted into the state budget to just \$175 million, which translated to a \$3 per month reduction for the average taxpayer.

And he vetoed a GOP tax cut plan in November that mirrored the one Republicans are advancing now.

...

Democratic Minority Leader Greta Neubauer blasted the package at the outset of the floor session, calling it "fiscally irresponsible." She warned that the cuts would disproportionately benefit the wealthy and drain the state's \$7 billion surplus.

**["SSSB 1 – Property Tax Cut," 2013-Wisconsin, CPAC, accessed 5/17/2024](#)**

Shankland: Yea

**["Wisconsin: Senate approves Walker's property tax cut plan." Associated Press, 11/7/2015](#)**

The Wisconsin Senate passed Gov. Scott Walker's \$100 million property tax cut proposal Tuesday with bipartisan support, even though Democrats complained it was more a political ploy than anything that would truly help people's pocketbooks.

The bill is speeding through the Legislature so it can take effect on property tax bills mailed this December. The Assembly planned to pass it Thursday, just a week after Walker introduced it. Walker hopes to sign it into law Friday.

	<p>On average, the tax cut will reduce taxes on the typical home \$13 this year and \$20 next year, although the exact effect will vary widely statewide based on where a person lives and how much their home is valued. Even under the cut, property taxes are still projected to increase by \$11 — from \$2,943 to \$2,954 — in two years for the median-valued \$148,000 home.</p> <p><b>Democratic opponents said the \$100 million cut sounded good but would actually amount to little for most families</b> and would only hurt the state’s budget.</p> <p>“What we’re doing is trying to help the governor get elected,” said Sen. Tim Cullen, D-Janesville. “At the end of the day, that is what this bill is all about.”</p> <p>...</p> <p>Wisconsin Democratic Party Chairman Mike Tate described the tax cut as a political stunt designed to distract voters after Burke announced she would run against Walker.</p> <p>“I don’t know anybody who is against property tax relief, but the reality is this is just — total political theater is what I would call it, you know for giving Wisconsin families an extra \$1.08 a month and knowing a lot of people’s tax bills are still going to go up because of the local levy,” Tate said.</p>
<p>and voting to remove restrictions that prevented sex offenders from being close to schools, parks and daycare centers.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">“Budget move would let Wisconsin sex offenders live closer to schools, day care centers.” Patrick Marley and Jason Stein, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 5/16/2017</a></b></p> <p>Sexual predators would have to live in their home counties when they are released but could be placed near schools, parks and day care centers, under a plan adopted Tuesday by the Legislature’s budget committee.</p> <p>The legislator behind the plan said he wanted to crack down on judges placing violent sex offenders far from their home counties, in part by putting the responsibility for finding housing for them in the hands of local officials.</p> <p>...</p> <p><b>The Joint Finance Committee approved the plan 13-3, with Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) joining all Republicans in supporting it. The other Democrats on the committee said the proposal should get a hearing and be dealt with as stand-alone legislation.</b></p> <p>...</p> <p><b>A law passed last year allowed judges to ignore local ordinances on where violent sex offenders could be placed, but also required that they be placed at least 1,500 feet from schools, child care centers, parks and churches.</b></p> <p><b>Under the proposal adopted Tuesday, those specific limits would no longer apply, though officials would still need to consider how close housing would be to such places.</b> Authority for placing the predators would shift from state officials to local officials.</p>