

How Partisan Gerrymandering Limits Access to Care

Written by Wisconsin Senate Democrats
Saturday, 29 February 2020 11:18

<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/healthcare-family-dr-s5.jpg>



The GOP majority in Madison, which actually represents a minority of Wisconsinites, is costing us money and lives by adhering to Walker era policy of resistance to Affordable Care, says Senator.

West Point - On February 24, 2020, the Center for American Progress released a report on how gerrymandering has prevented more than 2 million uninsured people from getting covered through the Medicaid expansion. The report analyzes states like Wisconsin that have refused to expand health insurance coverage to low income residents despite a majority of people supporting the idea. Extreme partisan gerrymandering insulates Republican politicians in legislatures like Wisconsin's from being held accountable for blocking access to coverage for over a hundred thousand people and sending billions of tax dollars to other states.

According to the report, "74% of Americans have a favorable view of Medicaid – including 82% of Democrats and 65% of Republicans." Here in Wisconsin, that is echoed. According to the Marquette Law Poll, 70% approve of the expansion of Medicaid. Despite its popularity, there are still states where Republican controlled legislatures, who remain in control due to gerrymandered districts, continue to refuse the expansion or are attempting to undermine the coverage with needless barriers.



"I'm not sure what it will take to get Wisconsin Republicans to see the error of their ways. All of

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the reports and studies show the same story,” said Senator Erpenbach. “Wisconsin is among the minority of states that continues to send over a billion federal taxpayer dollars to neighboring states in order to prove a point.”

In the 2018 general election, Wisconsin State Assembly Democratic candidates received 54.2% of the vote, and State Senate Democrats received 49% of the vote, however, Republicans still won a substantial majority in both chambers. Unfortunately, gerrymandering leads to candidates being more extreme and less likely to listen to their constituents once they’re in office, which is the case in Wisconsin. Despite the majority of Wisconsinites wanting expanded health care coverage, the report found that by refusing the expansion Wisconsin has forgone insuring 108,000 people which has resulted in 300 preventable deaths in 2019 alone.

“The Medicaid expansion would make health care more affordable for everyone,” said Senator Erpenbach. “It would reduce the costs of premiums on the individual market, save taxpayers millions of dollars, help keep rural hospitals open, and frankly, save lives. Extreme gerrymandering has held Wisconsin back and has resulted in Wisconsin falling behind neighboring states. It is vital that elected officials work for their constituents and in order for that to happen, voters need to be able to choose their leaders, not the other way around.”

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[View the Report here.](#)