

Campaign Contributors Benefited from Walker Rejection of BadgerCare Dollars

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Insurance Companies getting windfall of public dollars also donated big money to Walker and legislators.

Statewide - On Monday morning, Citizen Action of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Democracy Campaign called into question relationship between large campaign donations and the rejection of federal funds for BadgerCare. When Governor Walker rejected federal funds for BadgerCare, an [estimated 87,000 Wisconsin residents](#) were forced to purchase private health insurance coverage from the health insurance marketplace. Tens of thousands fell into an entirely unnecessary coverage gap.

The new data shows that the insurance industry was the biggest beneficiary of the decision to reject the funds for BadgerCare, and have donated massively to the campaigns of Governor Walker and Legislators who pushed the policy through.

According to data collected by the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, the insurance industry, including insurance agents, have contributed over [\\$1.26 million to Governor Walker](#) from the period between 2009 and 2013. This is

[over three times more](#)

than Governor Jim Doyle received from the industry from 2000-2012. The insurance industry also gave nearly \$1 million to State Legislators. The industry contributed over four times as much to Republican members of the State Assembly as their Democratic counterparts, and 2.7 times as much to State Senate Republicans. Data for 2014 is not yet available but experts believe the insurance industry contributions will be substantial.

These campaign contributions are dwarfed by the large financial windfalls for insurance companies resulting from the rejection of enhanced federal BadgerCare dollars. Federal marketplace plans are much more expensive than BadgerCare, and put the insurance industry in a position to profit substantially. Tracking the federal tax credits individuals denied BadgerCare receive instead to purchase private coverage, the data compiled by Citizen Action of Wisconsin shows that Wisconsin insurance companies would receive up to [\\$350 million per year extra in tax credits](#) for individual health policies. This does not include the premiums paid by individual consumers or new small business premiums.

“Many across Wisconsin have been confounded by Scott Walker’s seemingly irrational decision to leave hundreds of millions of federal dollars on the table that could have strengthened BadgerCare,” said Robert Kraig, Executive Director of Citizen Action of Wisconsin. “This data raised the disturbing specter that Walker and conservatives in the Legislature sold out their own constituents for campaign cash from the insurance industry. Leaving tens of thousands of Wisconsin families without health coverage in return for campaign donations is morally repugnant.”

“The question of federal funds for BadgerCare is a clear example of where the public wants one thing, and the insurance companies want another, and unfortunately the insurance companies succeeded in getting their way”, said Mike McCabe, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign. “There is a disturbingly high presence of contributions directly to the officials that had the ability to get the industry what it wanted.”

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