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A day after gutting health care programs around the state, GOP criminalizes reproductive care

MADISON, WI -Today, the Wisconsin Senate is adding itself to a disconcerting list of states that are trying to control people's access to reproductive care. The bills Republicans passed today take away health care rights and violate a person's decision-making ability. Counter to their beliefs, Republicans are not introducing legislation to protect lives, they are voting on bills with a political agenda to control Wisconsinites, and criminalize basic and necessary health care.

Democrats have introduced and promoted initiatives aimed at improving access to preventive care like basic health exams, cancer screenings, and STI testing. They consistently support healthier pregnancies and births, and are committed to addressing racial disparities in maternal and child health.

In response, Republican legislators have rejected those proposals, cut funding to essential programs, and instead introduced legislation to restrict access to health and reproductive care.

Through expanding Medicaid, Wisconsin had an opportunity to cover more people with less state money, while saving \$324.5 million and attracting 1.6 billion in federal dollars. Those dollars could have been invested in vital health care programs such as preventing child lead poisoning, reducing youth tobacco use, addressing the opioid crisis, improving access to dental and mental health care, and increased funding for nursing homes and dementia care specialists.

Yet again, Republicans turned their backs on the people of Wisconsin, rejected our own federal tax dollars, and cut \$900 million from the Department of Health Services compared to the Governor's proposal.

Republicans are attacking our freedom by challenging basic constitutional rights and putting special interests before Wisconsinites. Everyone should have the right to make health care decisions and politicians should not interfere with the patient-provider relationship. I am disappointed to see Republicans continually playing politics with our health care, and I urge the Governor to veto these archaic bills.

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