

Oberweis voted against protecting health care for those with pre-existing conditions, advocated for eliminating "All Kids," health insurance program for children and voted against lowering the cost of insulin.

2018: Oberweis Voted Against Protecting Pre-Existing Conditions Under The Affordable Care Act. Oberweis voted against HB4165, "Prohibits the Director of the Illinois Department of Central Management Services and the State from applying for any federal waiver that would reduce or eliminate any protection or coverage required under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) that was in effect on January 1, 2017, including, but not limited to, any protection for persons with pre-existing conditions and coverage for services identified as essential health benefits under the ACA. Provides that the Director may apply for such a waiver only if granted authorization by the General Assembly through a joint resolution. Amends the Illinois Insurance Code. Prohibits the State from applying for any federal waiver that would permit an individual or group health insurance plan to reduce or eliminate any protection or coverage required under the ACA that was in effect on January 1, 2017, including, but not limited to, any protection for persons with pre-existing conditions and coverage for services identified as essential health benefits under the ACA. Provides that the State may apply for such a waiver only if granted authorization by the General Assembly through a joint resolution. Amends the Illinois Public Aid Code. Prohibits the State from applying for any waiver of federal Medicaid requirements that would reduce or eliminate any protection or coverage required under the ACA that was in effect on January 1, 2017. Provides that the State may apply for such a waiver only if granted authorization by the General Assembly through a joint resolution. Effective immediately." The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 35 – 20. [Illinois General Assembly, HB4165, [5/31/18](#)]

2019: Oberweis Voted Against A Resolution That Expressed Support For The Affordable Care Act And Medicaid. Oberweis voted against SR0264, "Expresses support for the Affordable Care Act and the Medicaid program." The resolution passed the Senate by a vote of 40 – 19. [Illinois General Assembly, SR0264, [5/31/19](#)]

2020: Oberweis Said He Supported Repealing The Affordable Care Act. "I support repealing the ACA but I am not in favor of ending coverage for pre-existing conditions. I believe Medicaid for All eliminates choice, would be enormously expensive, and is an unworkable, unrealistic solution." [Chicago Sun Times, [1/22/20](#)]

The Affordable Care Act Prevented Insurers From Denying Coverage Or Charging More If An Individual Had A Pre-existing Condition. "In the old days, insurance companies had ways to avoid selling policies to people who were likely to cost more than insurers wanted to spend. They might deny them coverage outright, or exclude coverage for a known condition, or charge so much that insurance became unaffordable. The Affordable Care Act boxes out the old insurance practices with a package of legal moves. First, it says point-blank that carriers 'may not impose any preexisting condition exclusion.' It backs that up with another section that says they 'may not establish rules for eligibility' based on health status, medical condition, claims experience or medical history." [Politifact, [10/17/18](#)]

2019: Oberweis Voted Against The Health Care Affordability Act. Oberweis voted against SB1864, "Creates the Health Care Affordability Act. Requires the Department of Healthcare and Family Services, in consultation with the Department of Insurance, to oversee a feasibility study to explore options to make health insurance more affordable for Illinois residents. Provides that the Departments shall develop and submit a proposal to the General Assembly and the Governor concerning the design, costs, benefits, and implementation of a State option for health care coverage that leverages existing State infrastructure." The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 41 – 11. [Illinois General Assembly, SB1864, [10/29/19](#)]

2020: Oberweis Voted For A House Amendment Concurrence To The Health Care Affordability Act. The concurrence passed the Senate by a vote of 50 – 3. [Illinois General Assembly, SB1864, [5/23/20](#)]

The Bill Also Helped Families Enroll In And Maintain Coverage Through CHIP And ALL KIDS Act. "The Health Care Affordability Act helps families enroll and maintain coverage through the Children's Health Insurance Program and the ALL KIDS Act." [ABC20, [7/7/20](#)]

2016: Oberweis Voted Against Extending The ALL KIDS Health Insurance Act. Oberweis voted against HB5736, “Amends the Covering ALL KIDS Health Insurance Act. Changes the repeal date from July 1, 2016 to October 1, 2019.” The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 44 – 12. [Illinois General Assembly, HB5736, [5/18/16](#)]

Oberweis Wanted To Eliminate ALL KIDS. “Both Brady and Oberweis said they’d end All Kids. ‘There are some programs ... that I believe are better left to the private sector,’ Brady said. Oberweis said the state cannot afford the long-term costs.” [Chicago Daily Herald, 3/12/06]

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2019: Oberweis Voted Against Investigating Insulin Pricing Practices In Order To Protect Consumers. Oberweis voted against SB0667, “Replaces everything after the enacting clause. Amends the Attorney General Act. Provides that the Attorney General shall investigate the pricing of prescription insulin drugs to ensure adequate consumer protections for Illinois consumers and to determine whether additional consumer protections are necessary. Requires the Attorney General to make the findings available to the public and to report to the Governor, the Department of Insurance, and to the Judiciary Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Provides for the repeal of the Attorney General's investigative duties on December 31, 2020. Amends the Illinois Insurance Code. Provides that insurers that provide coverage for prescription insulin drugs must limit the total amount an insured is required to pay for a covered prescription insulin drug to \$100 per 30-day supply of insulin regardless of the type and amount of insulin needed by the insured. Provides that the limitation on insulin costs also applies to provisions requiring coverage of certain diabetes items to be subject to the same coverage, deductible, co-payment, and co-insurance provisions under a policy. Makes conforming changes in the State Employees Group Insurance Act of 1971, the Counties Code, the Illinois Municipal Code, the School Code, the Health Maintenance Organization Act, the Limited Health Service Organization Act, and the Voluntary Health Services Plans Act. Effective January 1, 2021, except that changes to the Attorney General Act take effect immediately.” The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 48 -7. [Illinois General Assembly, SB0667, [10/29/19](#)]

The Bill Capped Out-Of-Pocket Costs At \$100 For A 30-Day Supply. “The Illinois Senate on Tuesday approved a bill that would cap out-of-pocket costs for the diabetes drug insulin at \$100 for a 30-day supply. Despite opposition from the insurance and pharmaceutical industries, the measure passed on a bipartisan vote of 48-7 and now goes to the House for consideration. The price cap, which applies only to commercial insurance plans regulated by the state, would take effect Jan. 1, 2021. Gov. J.B. Pritzker has publicly supported the bill, which also requires the attorney general to investigate the pricing of prescription insulin and make recommendations for future consumer protections against rising costs.” [Chicago Tribune, [10/29/19](#)]

Divided over taxes, health No-tax pledge, health program split GOP governor's race
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Body

SPRINGFIELD - A promise to rule out tax increases is one of the few fiscal issues dividing the four major Republican candidates for governor.

Both Bloomington state Sen. Bill Brady and Sugar Grove dairy magnate Jim Oberweis vow there will be no tax increases if either is elected governor, a pledge that's become politically popular in recent elections.

"I will not support, nor will I sign, any increases or expansion of the state income tax and state sales tax," Brady said in responding to a Daily Herald questionnaire regarding the candidates' views on taxes and state budget issues.

However, state Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka of Riverside and millionaire Chicago businessman Ron Gidwitz both refused to take such a pledge.

"I believe 'no-tax' pledges are phony and meaningless. I have not and will not take a phony pledge. Governors must live within their means, but no person seeking the governorship can predict the conditions he or she will face in the next four years," Topinka said.

Gidwitz called such pledges "gimmicks."

But aside from their different views on tax pledges, all four major GOP candidates agree Illinoisans already pay enough to drink, smoke and gamble and uniformly opposed any increases to so-called "sin taxes."

The foursome also said they'd nix attempts to raise any other state taxes or fees, something done by Democrats in recent years to balance state spending without hitting taxpayers across the board.

All Kids

Whether All Kids, the state's new health insurance program for children, has a political future if there's a Republican governor again divides the four major candidates.

Beginning this summer, any child can get insurance through the state. The cost depends on the family income. The more money parents make, the more they pay. The state will subsidize a portion by implementing managed care savings to other health care programs.

Both Topinka and Gidwitz said they'd keep All Kids.

"I will not stop programs providing health care to those who need it," said Topinka, who suggested there might be ways to make All Kids more efficient.

Gidwitz said he'd impose greater restrictions on who qualifies.

Currently, any child qualifies regardless of family income. Families making \$80,000 or more would essentially be paying full price, and families making more than \$100,000 should be able to find cheaper programs in the private sector.

Both Brady and Oberweis said they'd end All Kids.

"There are some programs ... that I believe are better left to the private sector," Brady said.

Oberweis said the state cannot afford the long-term costs.

Budget fixes

Brady, Gidwitz and Topinka all offered support for requiring the state's health care program for the poor and elderly to switch to managed care, a move studies have suggested could save taxpayers as much as \$200 million.

Brady also called for abolishing the Illinois State Board of Education and replacing it with a much smaller agency accountable to the governor.

Gidwitz said savings could be found in the budget of the state's central procurement agency, which has been the subject of several critical audits about how tax dollars are spent.

Oberweis said he'd eliminate the \$10 million for stem cell research Blagojevich and Democratic leaders put in the budget. He also called for the repeal of a state program that helps immigrants buy homes. And he'd open up state construction jobs to nonunion companies to reduce costs.

Topinka said money is being wasted on state projects of questionable value and said she'd end no-bid consulting contracts.

Pension fixes

All four major Republican candidates said new state hires should either be offered or required to join 401(k) retirement programs rather than the traditional state pension packages.

The state has not kept up with contributions to those plans and the result is a crushing, multibillion-dollar debt that grows significantly each year it is not properly financed.

"Illinois taxpayers cannot afford the long-term costs of defined benefit plans that far exceed our ability to pay," Oberweis said in calling for the switch to 401(k) plans.

Gidwitz also said pensions should not be subject to automatic cost-of-living increases.