

Oberweis supports making it harder for women to get birth control and opposes a woman's right to choose even in cases of rape and incest.

2016: Oberweis Voted Against Requiring Individual Or Group Health Policies To Cover All Contraceptive Drugs. Oberweis voted against HB5576, "Makes changes to a Section concerning coverage for contraceptives. Provides that an individual or group health policy shall provide coverage for all contraceptive drugs, devices, and other products approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration, including over-the-counter contraceptive drugs, devices, and products; voluntary sterilization procedures; contraceptive services, patient education, and counseling on contraception; and follow-up services related to their use. Provides that if the United States Food and Drug Administration has approved one or more therapeutic equivalent versions of a contraceptive drug, device, or product, a policy is not required to include all therapeutic equivalent versions in its formulary, so long as at least one is included and covered without cost-sharing; if an individual's attending provider recommends a particular service or item approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration based on a determination of medical necessity with respect to that individual, the plan or issuer must cover that service or item without cost sharing and the plan or issuer must defer to the determination of the attending provider; if a drug, device or product is not covered, plans and issuers must have an easily accessible, transparent, and sufficiently expedient process that is not unduly burdensome on the individual or a provider or person acting as a patient's authorized representative to ensure coverage without cost sharing; and that coverage must provide for the dispensing of 12 months' worth of contraception at one time. Defines 'contraceptive services', 'medical necessity', and 'therapeutic equivalent version'. Removes language prohibiting the provisions from being construed to require an insurance company cover services related to permanent sterilization requiring a surgical procedure." The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 35 – 22. [Illinois General Assembly, HB5576, [5/25/16](#)]

The Bill Expanded Contraceptive Coverage Beyond The ACA And Was One Of The Most

Comprehensive Contraceptive Laws In The County. "Thousands of Illinois women will have an easier time affording the birth-control pills and other contraceptives that are best for them under a bill Gov. Bruce Rauner signed into law late last week. House Bill 5576, which will take effect Jan. 1, expands birth-control access beyond what is required under the federal Affordable Care Act and gives Illinois 'the most comprehensive contraceptive law on the books in the country,' according to EverThrive Illinois' Kathy Waligora." [State Journal-Register, [8/2/16](#)]

2006: Chicago Sun-Times: Oberweis Said He Would Sign Legislation To Outlaw Abortions Even In Cases Of Rape And Incest. "Abortion is perhaps the most obvious example. In a 2001 interview with radio personality Steve Dahl, Oberweis said government ought to leave the issue alone, citing Afghanistan's Taliban rulers as 'what can happen if we try to impose our religious views on others.' The comment infuriated the GOP's right wing, and Oberweis backpedaled. So much so that now, rather than adopting a hands-off approach on abortion, the candidate said he would sign legislation to outlaw abortions even in cases of rape and incest." [Chicago Sun-Times, 3/12/06]

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Milk magnate hoping third time's the charm: But he's made few friends in his own party in recent years
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Body

Once ballots are totaled in the March 21 Republican gubernatorial primary, Jim Oberweis' political career can be summed up by one of two cliches: Either three strikes and you're out, or third time is a charm.

Oberweis' run for the Executive Mansion marks the third time in three election cycles he has set his sights on a highly sought political office. In 2002 and 2004, Oberweis wanted to be U.S. senator but each time wound up finishing second in crowded Republican primaries.

HITS HARD AT GOP LEADER

The message Oberweis has fashioned this go-around is that he is the GOP's reform candidate for governor, someone not favored by the party establishment nor someone who was in Springfield as corruption flourished under Republican George Ryan.

"We'll end this culture of corruption that has been so prevalent in this state," said Oberweis, a multimillionaire who has pledged not to accept campaign contributions from state contractors, zeroing in on an issue that promises to dog Gov. Blagojevich should he win the Democratic primary.

"He's not associated with all this crap, corruption, and mess, inappropriate legislation and pay to play, the bipartisan culture of sleaze," said Jack Roeser, president of the Family Taxpayers Network, his largest financial patron.

To that end, the dairy magnate and investment manager doesn't frame the ethics issue only around Democrats. Oberweis has slammed his own party with fervor.

He has hit the fund-raising practices of GOP rival Judy Baar Topinka and lashed out at Illinois' National Republican Committeeman Robert Kjellander for reeling in \$809,000 in consulting fees from Bear, Stearns & Co., which the administration chose as the lead underwriter for its 2003 \$10 billion pension borrowing deal.

"This is a poster child for what's wrong with the Republican Party. Here's a guy who's supposed to be a high-ranking officer of the Republican Party, yet he's paid an \$809,000 commission to lobby on behalf of the Democratic governor's bond debt deal," Oberweis said.

Kjellander, treasurer of the National Republican Committee, dismisses Oberweis as an irrelevant opportunist.

"This is a guy who desperately wants to be important. Jim cares about no kind of principle, other than he desperately, desperately wants to be elected to something. He's really rather pathetic," he said.

On other issues, Oberweis, 59, has a platform consistent with the agenda of the GOP's far right. He opposes tax increases and all abortions except to save the mother's life. He believes minors seeking abortions should have a parent's OK. He favors school vouchers and opposes gambling expansion. He backs allowing concealed weapons.

Supporters say his background running the family dairy operation and a \$2 billion investment firm bearing his name make him ready to take control of the state's \$54 billion budget.

"I think he'd make a great governor. Jim's great asset is he knows how to run something, and in the process, he might achieve honest budget cuts instead of show-and-tell and magic," said former U.S. Rep. Ed Derwinski, chairman of Oberweis' political fund and a veteran of GOP politics.

But Derwinski, who first met Oberweis while chairing Republican Barry Goldwater's 1964 Illinois campaign, said he worries Oberweis may have swung too far to the right.

"I've been a little frustrated, being the wise old statesman, that I haven't been consulted a lot in their campaign. When I have, I've said, 'Don't get painted into the far right corner, and leave yourself some room for the fall,' " Derwinski said. "I don't really know who's calling the shots sometimes."

OBERWEIS' PICKS

Tastiest thing you can cook: "I don't cook, but I make the best ice cream in the world."

TV show you hate to admit you like: "Alias"

Last live music performance you attended: The Rolling Stones at Soldier Field

Biggest mistake? "I think the biggest mistake we make is not to tell our loved ones how much they mean to us."

Celebrity you'd like to be stuck in an elevator with? "Julie Wilkinson, my fiancée. She's a celebrity to me."

Book you have read cover to cover the most times: "I read most books just once."

Childhood nickname? OB.

David Letterman or Jay Leno? Leno

STYLE

To sell himself as a homespun conservative steeped in Midwestern values, Jim Oberweis takes a cooler full of vanilla ice cream samples from his Aurora dairy to political functions, doling out frozen treats to supporters and the curious.

But on the stump, he has a style that is anything but soft-serve. He seems to relish confrontation to make a point. However, a trait supporters call plainspokenness has created backlashes and raised questions about his temperament and political savvy.

One of the most memorable images of Oberweis was his August 2005 appearance at Republican Day at the Illinois State Fair, an event designed to be a political pep rally.

Oberweis took the dais and wasted no time calling for the ouster of National Republican Committeeman Robert Kjellander, who was seated a few feet behind him on the stage and left with no option but to listen to Oberweis' searing words with a sour look on his face.

Kjellander has faced widespread criticism for an \$809,000 consulting fee his lobbying firm pocketed for work associated with Democratic Gov. Blagojevich's \$10 billion pension borrowing deal in 2003.

Oberweis' speech is "one of the best things he ever did," conservative activist Jack Roeser said. "He stood up in public in a place where he was putting it on the line and said something that was bound to get press attention about these rotten people."

But other senior Republicans at the event were stunned at Oberweis' venom, even those who are not particularly enamored with Kjellander's leadership.

"It's ironic because we share concerns about Bob's effectiveness as a state party leader and national committeeman," said House Minority Leader Tom Cross (R-Oswego), who Thursday endorsed the gubernatorial candidacy of Republican Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka.

FUNDS

The pockets on Jim Oberweis' tailored business suits don't look unusual, except for how deep they are.

Through the beginning of this month, Oberweis and his businesses have pumped \$2.9 million in direct cash donations, loans or contributed services into his political fund, state campaign records show.

That total accounts for approximately 85 cents of every dollar that has come into the Oberweis for Illinois campaign account since it was formed in March 2005.

But it's barely a drop in the bucket for the Aurora dairy magnate and investor, who told the Sun-Times he expects to spend in excess of \$3 million on his campaign for governor.

Oberweis' net worth ranged as high as \$29.9 million in federal income disclosures he filed in August 2003 as part of his second U.S. Senate bid.

Beyond how his personal wealth has inflated his campaign fund, the next-largest investor in Oberweis for Illinois is conservative activist Jack Roeser and the Family Taxpayers Network organization that Roeser founded and leads. The Roeser-related contributions total more than \$200,000.

The fact that Oberweis has pumped so much of his own funds into his campaign will enable him to remain independent and not sell out taxpayers by bowing to the interests of big-money donors, Roeser said.

"This guy is too rich to steal," Roeser said.

After Roeser, Oberweis' next-largest donor is Sugar Grove developer Jerry Rich, who donated nearly \$57,000 last year. Rich owns a 1,800-acre estate that includes a professional-caliber 18-hole golf course, a horse farm and prairie.

Oberweis' outside financial commitments drop off significantly after Rich, state campaign records show.

BAGGAGE

Steve Neal, the late Chicago Sun-Times political columnist, dubbed Jim Oberweis the "human weather vane" and, less generously, "the Milk Dud."

The reason behind Neal's antipathy toward Oberweis as he geared up for a 2004 U.S. Senate run was his abrupt, inexplicable shift on abortion, an issue that dogs the Aurora dairy magnate and investor to this day.

But more broadly, that shift underlies trust issues that some groups have with Oberweis and demonstrates how earlier incarnations of Oberweis threaten to haunt him in his current campaign.

Abortion is perhaps the most obvious example. In a 2001 interview with radio personality Steve Dahl, Oberweis said government ought to leave the issue alone, citing Afghanistan's Taliban rulers as "what can happen if we try to impose our religious views on others."

The comment infuriated the GOP's right wing, and Oberweis backpedaled. So much so that now, rather than adopting a hands-off approach on abortion, the candidate said he would sign legislation to outlaw abortions even in cases of rape and incest.

Oberweis also is remembered for the inflammatory anti-immigration ad he approved in 2004. He flew over Soldier Field in a helicopter to underscore that the number of illegal immigrants entering America on a daily basis could fill the stadium, but his math didn't pass muster with some critics.

"Did the ad effectively portray our position? Yes. Was the ad too harsh in its tone? Probably," Oberweis said.

And try as he might to capitalize on the pay-to-play scandals that have led to criminal probes of Gov. Blagojevich's administration, Oberweis has a past link to former Gov. George Ryan that has raised questions.

In 2003, Oberweis traveled to Kankakee to court Ryan for his support in the 2004 Senate primary as federal investigators crept ever closer toward indicting Ryan on corruption charges.

"I didn't know the facts of the case. I didn't know as much about George Ryan's history as I do today," Oberweis said when asked about the Ryan meeting. "I wish I had known more."