

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Walker Tries to Hide Support for BadgerCare Time Limits

For Nearly a Year, Walker Has Called for Time Limits, Now Weasels

Madison – For a year, Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker has repeatedly and specifically called for time limits for the state’s BadgerCare health care program to provide coverage to working families. But after repeating the call for time limits during Wednesday night’s gubernatorial debate, Walker is attempting to claim he doesn’t support time limits.

The effect of imposing time limits would be to end health coverage for up to 350,000 uninsured working Wisconsinites, expectant mothers and children without coverage. [Wisconsin Department of Health Services]

“Scott Walker has spent a year calling for time limits for BadgerCare,” said Scot Ross, One Wisconsin Now Executive Director. “We can’t trust Scott Walker to tell us the truth, but we do know he wants to significantly slash and put time limits on BadgerCare, and he’s been criss-crossing Wisconsin delivering this message. Now, caught in the spotlight, he’s falsely telling the people of Wisconsin he doesn’t support time limits. That is simply not believable. Walker needs to tell the truth.”

Walker is looking for budget cuts as a way to pay for nearly \$2-billion in tax cuts he has proposed for corporations and the state’s wealthiest people, Ross said.

At Wednesday’s debate with former U.S. Rep. Mark Neumann, Walker said of BadgerCare:

It was supposed to be a temporary safety net for people as they went from welfare into the workforce and it was [sic] be a temporary step up as they moved into permanent employment. Instead, under this governor, we’ve had the time limits go away and we see a permanent entitlement created, and that has brought about all sorts of fraud and abuse, and problems not only there, but with the childcare component as well. That will stop when I’m the governor. [Walker-Neumann Debate, 8/25/10]

When he was questioned by the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* about this call for time limits, the newspaper wrote, “On Thursday, Walker said he did not want to put time limits on BadgerCare Plus as he appeared to indicate in the debate a day earlier.”

Research compiled by One Wisconsin Now shows that Walker has called for time limits for BadgerCare recipients, in various media outlets in the state, dating all the way back to October 2009, including:

WISC-TV

Reporter: Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, a Republican candidate for governor, said he thinks BadgerCare has become an entitlement program, rather than temporary assistance.

(more)

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Walker: I think it has to be not just a pure time limit, but progressions for, “You’ve got this amount of time; here’s what we expect you to do; here’s the options you should have by that time.” So that there are clearly defined expectations of how you’re going to ease off assistance from the government. [WISC-TV, 10/9/09, <http://www.channel3000.com/politics/21245471/detail.html>]

“On the Issues with Mike Gousha”

Gousha: Would you eliminate something like BadgerCare?

Walker: Wouldn’t eliminate it. I’d streamline it down so you had time limits on things of that nature and so that you were really helping people who need to get into the workforce. Have a temporary stepping stone to get into the workforce, which is what it was originally intended to do. [“On the Issues with Mike Gousha,” 3/11/10; <http://law.marquette.edu/cgi-bin/site.pl?2130&pageID=3012>]

Appleton Post-Crescent

Reporter: On BadgerCare, are you talking about setting a time limit for assistance and then knocking people off when they reach the time limit?

Walker: I think you have to have time limits in place, as we did under Gov. (Tommy) Thompson’s original proposal, and the state has to work more aggressively for ways to plug people in on the W-2 side, working with local counties, into work opportunities. In most cases, you’re talking about 24 months, depending on the threshold there. [Appleton Post-Crescent, 6/16/10, <http://www.postcrescent.com/article/20100616/APC06/6160364/Q-A-Republican-governor-candidate-Scott-Walker-discusses-plans-to-fix-Wisconsin-s-problems>]

WisPolitics.com

Reporter: You brought up Wisconsin Shares today. You voted for that when you were in the legislature, correct?

Walker: That and BadgerCare were supposed to be things that allowed people to temporarily have a safety net, a stepping stone, if they went into the private sector, into the workforce. The problems then, by lifting the time limits on W-2, you open the door to making this a permanent entitlement and as governor, I’d like to rein that in. [Wispolitics.com, 3/10]

WTMJ-AM

Sykes: Can you realistically cut government spending, I mean sorry cut taxes and balance a state budget that is this deeply in the red and isn’t there a risk that it would just shift the cost to huge property tax increases?

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Walker: I think to balance this next budget it's going to take two parallel strategies. One is to reduce spending and that means going after government waste, specifically things like BadgerCare and looking at how extensive it has become looking at Wisconsin Shares and Child Care Program. We've all read stories where they were both supposed to be... But the reality is that both of those were supposed to be temporary safety nets and they've become permanent entitlements. We've got to pull back on those. ["Charlie Sykes Insight 2010," WTMJ, 3/1/10, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-z26bnc_8zM]

"Throughout his campaign, when Scott Walker talks about BadgerCare, he talks about time limits," said Ross. "Scott Walker wants to cut hundreds of thousands of working Wisconsinites, expectant mothers and children from BadgerCare to pay for tax cuts for the rich and big business."

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One Wisconsin Now is a statewide communications network specializing in effective earned media and online organizing to advance progressive leadership and values.