

GOP Rep Returns Health Insurance Cash in Bid to Win Over Voters

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Photographer: Nic Antaya/Bloomberg

Summary by Bloomberg AI

- Rep. Tom Barrett is launching a healthcare ad that puts distance between himself and corporate health insurance companies, saying they "get richer while we get sicker".
- Barrett's ad says he doesn't take money from health insurance companies and that he sent their money back and told them to lower premiums instead, but his opponent's campaign says this is a "political ploy".
- Barrett is touting his Care Over Profits Act, which would increase the medical loss ratio and require insurance companies to spend a higher percentage of their premium revenue on medical care.

A House Republican running in a toss-up district in Michigan is launching a healthcare ad Thursday that puts distance between himself and corporate health insurance companies.

"Every year, we pay more for health insurance that covers less and less when we actually need it. They get richer while we get sicker," Rep. [Tom Barrett](#) (R-Mich.) **says in the ad**, provided first to Bloomberg Government, which is airing on television. "I'm Tom Barrett and I don't take a dime from health insurance companies. I sent their money back and told them to lower premiums instead."

House Republicans are hoping to cling to control of the chamber this November, and Barrett is in one of the most competitive races in the country.

Barrett is tapping into an anti-corporate message that aligns more closely with the populist side of the Republican party. But it also mirrors the ethos of Democratic socialist candidates who have been winning primaries across the country this year while campaigning on refusing corporate donations. That includes Barrett's general election opponent, Will Lawrence, who has vowed not to take any corporate funds.

"Tom Barrett has a track record of siding with corporate donors over Michigan families. Returning his donations is a political ploy meant to distract from the fact that he voted to gut Medicare and Medicaid and drive up everyone's premiums," said Lawrence's campaign manager, Stevie O'Hanlon, in a

statement. “He’s spent his time in Congress handing corporations and drug companies billions in tax breaks while raising costs for Michiganders on the basics.”

According to Federal Election Commission data, Barrett refunded a \$2,500 campaign contribution in January that he received from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan’s political action committee. But, according to the latest FEC filings, the GOP candidate did not return campaign donations from the American Hospital Association, a major hospital industry PAC.

In the ad, Barrett also touts his Care Over Profits Act ([H.R. 7861](#)), a bill that would increase the medical loss ratio and requires insurance companies to spend a higher percentage of their premium revenue on medical care. It would also crack down on insurance agents who fraudulently open or change Affordable Care Act marketplace plans.

Barrett didn’t join a number of other vulnerable House Republicans in January who voted to extend the enhanced ACA premium tax credits. Instead, he’s been **rolling out** different pieces of healthcare legislation to penalize ACA insurance fraud, expand health savings accounts, and codify President Trump’s Most Favored Nation drug pricing plan.

Jason Roe, Barrett’s campaign spokesperson, said his candidate is spending \$305,000 on the television ad and will air it throughout the Lansing area over the next three weeks.

“President Obama promised broader coverage, lower premiums, and better healthcare with Obamacare. It was a failure and costs spiraled out of control and our system became worse,” said Roe in a statement about the ad.

“The only winners were the insurance companies. People are tired of higher premiums, denials of their claims, and cuts to benefits. It is time for the healthcare insurance industry to put the people they insure ahead of their profit margins,” he said.

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