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Rep. Tsernoglou, doctors, healthcare advocates highlight Republicans' crushing healthcare cuts as Protect Our Care bus tour rolls into Lansing

Care Force One travels across more than 15 states, makes more than 35 stops, covers nearly 8,000 miles



Watch the event in Lansing here.

LANSING, Mich. – Michigan Rep. **Penelope Tsernoglou,** patients and healthcare advocates today joined Protect Our Care's "Sick of It! Fix Health Care Now" bus tour, calling out Donald Trump and Republicans in Congress for taking a wrecking ball to our healthcare system.

"Michiganders across Mid-Michigan are sick of the attacks on our healthcare by Republicans in Congress and politicians like Tom Barrett, John James and Mike Rogers, who voted in Congress again and again to take away people's healthcare, and make prescription drugs more expensive," Tsernoglou said. "Families struggling to pay for $4.50 gas and skyrocketing groceries are sick of being forced to pay thousands of dollars more a year for their healthcare premiums and their medications. We must continue to hold politicians and candidates accountable when they take away people's healthcare and put lives at risk."

“When healthcare becomes expensive and inaccessible, people wait longer to get care for otherwise treatable, manageable conditions,” said Dr. **Michael Zaroukian**, MD, a Lansing-area internal medicine physician. “Patients struggling with skyrocketing costs split pills and delay medication such as insulin or beta blockers, which can have devastating consequences. Without access to healthcare, a manageable medical condition can become a complex, expensive and life-and-death medical emergency.”

“Medicaid is the only thing that helps keep a roof over our heads and put food on the table,” said **Maren McCue**, a mother who had to quit her good-paying job to care for her disabled adult son. “My family’s story could happen to anyone in Michigan. One bad break is all it takes to change the course of your life. We played by the rules, and now we’re being punished so billionaires get a tax break. Trump’s attacks on healthcare are inhumane and they are an attack on all families.”

“President Trump and Republicans in Congress want those of us on Medicaid to lose our dignity first to get our healthcare, and that’s not right,” said **Cynthia Burton**, a Mid-Michigan resident who gets her healthcare through Medicaid and cares for her disabled husband. “If I lose healthcare, I won’t be able to pay for my prescription medications which I need so I can be healthy enough to care for my disabled husband. Many Michiganders on Medicaid may lose our healthcare, our health and maybe even our lives, but we do not deserve to also lose our dignity.”

“I talk to many seniors and families who struggle to pay huge medical bills, fill their prescriptions and afford their healthcare, and the situation for many families has worsened since President Trump signed the bill that took healthcare away from hardworking Michigan families, so he can give a huge handout to billionaires,” said **Eric Schneidewind**, a senior advocate and retired president of the AARP. “With gas now more than $4 a gallon and grocery costs through the roof, many older Michiganders are now forced to choose between seeing a doctor and putting food on the table. Michiganders work hard and play by the rules, and they still can’t afford healthcare. In the world’s wealthiest nation, this is a huge shame and President Trump bears the responsibility.”

Across the country, hard-working families are fed up with the growing healthcare crisis after Trump and Republicans like Congressman **Tom Barrett**, who represents Mid-Michigan, slashed more than $1 trillion from Medicaid and gutted Affordable Care Act (ACA) tax credits to bankroll tax breaks for billionaires and big corporations. In Barrett’s congressional district, more than 24,000 people will lose their healthcare, according to Congress’ own analysis.

During the bus tour, Michiganders impacted by Republican cuts to healthcare called on lawmakers to enact commonsense healthcare solutions, including restoring tax credits to lower insurance premiums, reversing devastating Medicaid cuts, expanding Medicare's power to negotiate lower prices for more drugs and extending those lower prices to all Americans with insurance, penalizing drug companies that raise prices faster than inflation, and protecting patients from high costs by extending the annual $2,000 out-of-pocket cap and the $35 insulin co-pay cap to people with private coverage.

“Nine years ago I walked into the doctor’s office with a nagging cough and walked out with a stage four cancer diagnosis,” said **Laura Packard,** a Michigan native, cancer survivor and national healthcare advocate**.** “Luckily, I had good insurance that paid for the chemotherapy and radiation I needed to survive. But I’m sick of watching Donald Trump and Republicans in Congress, like Tom Barrett, demolish our healthcare system. Lawmakers need to restore the tax credits that keep premiums affordable, reverse these devastating Medicaid cuts, and make sure people like me can actually afford to survive. Cancer doesn’t wait, and neither should Congress.”

The “Sick of It! Fix Health Care Now” bus tour visited Flint and Warren on Monday, and continues to Kalamazoo today, before traveling on to Wisconsin.

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