



Walden's political savvy comes naturally. His father, Paul Walden, served three terms in the House of Representatives in the 1970s. The family descends from Oregon pioneers. Paul and Greg Walden were radio station owners in Hood River, and Greg graduated the University of Oregon with a degree in journalism.

Greg Walden was elected to the Oregon Legislature in 1988 and then to the House of Representatives in 1998. In both the state Legislature and in Congress, Walden was able to gain valuable political power.

Walden seems to be using that power to reinforce Trump's agenda, a dubious strategy seeing as the White House is rocked by scandal after scandal, raising eyebrows on MSNBC and FOX News alike.

According to the statistics and analysis website *FiveThirtyEight*, Walden votes in line with Trump's positions 100 percent of the time. From the May 4 vote on the American Health Care Act to the Feb. 3 vote to repeal a rule requiring energy companies to reduce waste and emissions, not to mention a Jan. 13 budget resolution to repeal the Affordable Care Act, Walden toes the Trump party line.

Tony Corcoran, who once served with Walden in the state Legislature, remembers that if there's one thing that let Walden gain power at the state level it "wasn't because he had any particular control of the lobby or anything. It was because he's an approachable guy."

Corcoran, who writes *EW*'s "Hot Air" column, adds, "He presents so nicely, but his voting record is horrible for Oregonians."

Corcoran says, "The most egregious thing about Walden is he didn't have guts enough — after his own personal experience with his child dying — to stand up," comparing Walden's health care vote and own personal experience to that of comedian Jimmy Kimmel.

Kimmel famously opened his May 1 late night show with the story of how his son Billy was born in April with a congenital heart defect that required immediate surgery. Aware that Republicans were considering doing away with protections for those with pre-existing conditions in proposed "repeal and replace" legislation in Congress, Kimmel told his audience, "Before 2014, if you were born with congenital heart disease like my son was, there was a good chance you would never be able to get health insurance."

He continued, "You were born with a pre-existing condition, and if your parents didn't have medical insurance, you might not even live long enough to get denied because of a pre-existing condition."

Walden's own son was born with a severe heart defect that would require a transplant. Garrison Daniel Walden died barely a day after his birth in 1993.

"He's the one responsible for repeal and replace," Corcoran says of Walden.

Longtime political cartoonist and Pulitzer Prize-winner Jack Ohman of the *Sacramento Bee* wrote a column excoriating Walden after the health care vote. Ohman, an editorial cartoonist for *The Oregonian* for 29 years, writes in the May 5 column that Walden was known for his niceness, "but after the health care vote. I've decided Walden isn't so nice after all."

Ohman tells *EW*, "Here's a guy who traffics on being likeable and he's become ONE OF THEM." Ohman stresses the capital letters, adding, "He's the swamp."

And Ohman, says, "It's not just him, it's 240 or however many Republican congressmen who have basically made a Faustian bargain."

Why is Ohman, who previously found Walden so likeable, so harsh?

"You're talking about people dying here," Ohman says. "You are jeopardizing thousands of people's lives, sentencing them to death because there are some structural flaws in a program the Republicans originally came up with." He points to the origins of Obamacare in Massachusetts under then-Republican governor, and later presidential candidate, Mitt Romney.

Ohman, who writes in his column of the loss of Walden's child, ponders basic empathy, or the lack of it: "Historically when congressmen or senators have a personal experience, they become sensitive to it. Someone in Congress would have sympathy for people whose kids have congenital defects that would be treated under Obamacare but not under Trump."



Don't call it a health care bill, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon Executive Director Mary Nolan says of the bill Walden helped orchestrate. "Call it a tax break."

Trumpcare would roll back the expansion of Medicaid

from the ACA and remove federal funding from Planned Parenthood for one year.

Planned Parenthood operates 12 health centers in Oregon, four of them in Walden's 2nd congressional district, in Bend, Ashland, Medford and Grants Pass. "He's acknowledged he's never entered a Planned Parenthood health center," Nolan says of the congressman. "But he's bound and determined to close us down, knowing nothing about us."

Planned Parenthood has invited Walden to come tour one of its health care centers "Not a show," Nolan says. "We genuinely want him to inform himself, learn who our patients are among his constituents."

Nolan says she has never received a response to the invitation, but it still stands.

EW asked Discigil if Walden intended to respond, but also did not get an answer.

Nolan says that among Planned Parenthood's health centers, about two-thirds of the patients rely on health insurance or subsidies from public health plans. And that percentage is higher in the 2nd congressional district.

"Women will be forced by insurance companies to pay higher premiums to access health care just because they are women," she says. "I thought we left that dark age 25 years ago."

Nolan points to the numbers. The bill takes away health coverage for 24 million people, according to the Congressional Budget Office. And she says Walden's district was in the top 10 of 435 congressional districts in terms of how many people benefitted from the expansion of the ACA. But the bill Walden wrote retreats from that.

Earlier this month, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on Klamath County in Walden's vast district. It saw "more changes than most from the 2010 Affordable Care Act's expansion of the health insurance program for low-income people. Its uninsured rate fell sharply. Its sole hospital nearly tripled its Medicaid revenue, helping finance an expansion. ACA funds fueled health-care hiring and provided work for contractors."

"The bill would affect the healthcare of 100,000 people in Walden's district. It sends them back into chaos," Nolan says.

Nolan is heartened by the people "finding their voice and expressing firmly and directly, and loudly in some instances" to express their dissatisfaction to Walden.

But, she says, "I'm not heartened by the way he seems to be reacting. It seems as if it's not influencing him at all — what his constituents are concerned about, what they want him to advocate for on their behalf is lost on him."

In her mind, Nolan says, and in her understanding of the English language, "that doesn't comport with 'representative.'"

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