

The Delray Democrat

Rick Scott Is Dangerous to Your Health¹

June Sandra Neal

Rick Scott is dangerous to your health. He’s an elitist multi-millionaire, out of touch with everyday Americans and determined to abolish government-sponsored health care, leaving millions of people vulnerable to suffering and financial catastrophe.

From opposition to abortion rights and federal support for IVF to threats to Medicare and Medicaid, Florida’s doctrinaire former governor and current junior senator has consistently voted against our best interests. As governor, he denied Floridians millions in federal health care dollars, ironically after he made his personal fortune running a fraudulent, private hospital company. What makes him so despicable is that he doesn’t legislate from core values; when he encounters political blowback, he claims that what he said isn’t what he said.

He’s a threat to Medicare, Medicaid and The Affordable Care Act

On February 22, 2022, Scott announced his 12-point Plan to Rescue America, a proposal to “sunset” all federal programs after five years, which include Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act and Social Security. He claimed Congress could “revisit” them, knowing the threat they’d encounter in a Republican-controlled congress. Then, facing backlash from Democrats, seniors and some Republicans, Scott suggested we shouldn’t believe our lyin’ eyes—that he didn’t mean to include the health care programs. Oh yes, he did. He had railed against them for years.

In an Op-Ed published by [Miami Herald](#) on July 14, 2017, Governor Rick Scott wrote:

“There is absolutely no question that Obamacare must be repealed immediately so Americans can actually afford to purchase [private] health insurance.

“States like Florida that have run increasingly efficient Medicaid programs, and have not expanded Medicaid, must be rewarded.

“We have been efficient with our dollars while providing quality care to those who truly need Medicaid.”

Does he think the hundreds of thousands denied coverage weren’t in need?

Even Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell attacked Scott’s 12-point plan. So, grasping for a political lifeboat, Scott went off the rails with his [Protect Our Seniors Act](#), and a nutty funding idea: take money the Biden Administration had set aside to hire 87,000 new IRS agents and put it into the Medicare piggy bank. But then Scott claimed there’d be no funds to transfer anyway! “This will be a short-term gig. Republicans will take over the House and Senate in January, and I

¹ [The Delray Democrat](#), October 2024, page 11.

can promise you that we will immediately do everything in our power to defund this insane and unwarranted expansion of government [the IRS funds] into the lives of the [American people](#).”

Denying Medicaid Expansion

One of Scott’s greatest failures as governor of Florida was his refusal to accept one billion federal dollars to help [850,000 needy Floridians obtain Medicaid coverage](#) — only because of his antipathy to President Obama and any government-sponsored insurance. “*Opposing the Health Law, Florida Refuses Millions*,” declared [The New York Times](#).

“Despite having the country’s fourth-highest unemployment rate, its second-highest rate of people without insurance and a \$3.7 billion budget gap this year, the state has turned away scores of millions of dollars in grants made available under the Affordable Care Act,” the newspaper scolded.

Those who don’t qualify for Medicaid but can’t afford to buy into the ACA marketplace fall into the “coverage gap.” To fix the problem, “The ACA expanded Medicaid to nonelderly adults [with incomes up to 138% FPL](#) [federal poverty line] (\$20,782 annually for an individual in 2024),” *with 90% federal matching funds*.

That meant Florida would qualify for \$5.6 billion in federal aid in the first two years of the expansion program, and about \$4.4 billion annually after that. The plan also created uniform eligibility for low-income parents and for some adults without dependent children.

It was a really good deal. But states had the option of refusing the money due to a 2012 Supreme Court ruling. So, Scott did.

Obviously, no one should suffer untreated illness or die because of the inability to pay for health care. But Scott likes to govern by the old “bootstrap” philosophy. Problem is, as they say, people can’t pull themselves up by their bootstraps if they don’t have any. Private insurance is prohibitive for most Americans with its high premiums, deductibles and co-pays, plus the choking cost of prescription drugs. The only way health insurance is affordable is if we pool our money and share the service.

That’s why employee or union health care plans can offer good coverage at a reasonable price; they lower the costs through economies of scale. As a federal employee, that’s the kind of coverage Rick Scott enjoys. He just doesn’t want to share it with *you*.

Rick, here’s a tip: It doesn’t take much for illness to put hard-working people on their backs.

Even those with insurance may face financial catastrophe because of high deductibles or treatments that are not covered. A survey by the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) reported that “people with medical debt [report](#) cutting spending on food, clothing, and other household items, spending down their savings to pay for medical bills, borrowing money from friends or family members, or taking on additional debts.”

The [Commonwealth Fund’s](#) 2023 Health Care Affordability Survey title said it all. “Paying for It: How Health Care Costs and Medical Debt Are Making Americans Sicker and Poorer.”

And with officials like Scott, we can't ignore the influence of the private health care industry. According to [Open Secrets](#), hospitals and nursing homes contributed \$3,089,993 to Scott's campaign committee between 2019 and 2024.

Denying people affordable health care is inhumane. And unfair to taxpayers. Millions of sick Americans with no health insurance go without care, getting sicker until they're forced to seek help at a hospital where the cost of their care is astronomically higher than had they been treated from the start.

An offer he couldn't refuse—but Scott did

In 2013, the Obama administration offered Florida's one million Medicaid consumers managed care. Because this is a type of private insurance, Scott initially reversed his opposition and said he would accept the program. It was an offer most governors couldn't refuse. "The federal government would pay for 100 percent of the expansion until 2016, when states would start paying a 5 percent share that would gradually increase to a maximum of 10 percent of new costs by 2020," reported the [Palm Beach Post](#).

Shamelessly, he claimed it was the memory of his mother that brought about his change of heart. "Scott reflected on the death of his mother, Esther, last fall. He recalled her struggle to raise five children with little money, and a [constant worry of having health coverage for the family](#)." (Too bad he didn't remember her in prior years when he deprived thousands of other mothers in need.)

[Governing.com](#) reported, "Estimates vary, but analysts have said Medicaid expansion could bring Florida \$26 billion in federal dollars over the next decade. Florida taxpayers are expected to pay \$3 billion during that period, according to the state's Agency for Health Care Administration. The overhaul would eliminate a maze of categories that currently determine eligibility."

But that was a democratic dish Scott couldn't digest, so he flipped and decided not to participate, leaving hundreds of thousands of Floridians without coverage.

"The best way to have healthcare is to have a job," says [Scott](#).

Rick, here's another tip: Some people can't work because they are sick or disabled, or caring full-time for elderly parents or sandwiched between child and parental care. There are veterans suffering from PTSD and physical trauma. And some people have jobs that don't provide health care insurance.

Women's lives are no concern for Scott

When the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, Scott said, "SCOTUS is right to protect life, respect Federalism and [reverse Roe](#)." His alternatives? Adoption and maternal care services. Both arguments are made of sand; they fail to address the psychological and medical dangers that some pregnant women face.

"Abortion is healthcare," declared the [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#). And there are numerous reasons for the procedure. "They include, but are not limited to, contraceptive failure, barriers to contraceptive use and access, rape, incest, intimate partner violence, fetal

anomalies, illness during pregnancy, and exposure to teratogenic [causing fetal malformations] medications.” And the lack of access to abortion can be deadly. “Pregnancy complications, including placental abruption, bleeding from placenta previa, preeclampsia or eclampsia, and cardiac or renal conditions, may be so severe that abortion is the only measure to preserve a woman’s health or save her life.”

Nonetheless, in response to the Florida Supreme Court’s draconian six-week abortion ban last April, Scott told the [Washington Post](#) that he would “sign a six-week ban into law as governor, [and] he plans to vote against a November ballot initiative in Florida that would overturn the state’s new ban.” This, when, according to the [Pew Research Center](#), 56% of adults in Florida favor legalizing abortion in “all/most cases.” (Another 5% said they did not know.)

Scott even voted against legislation to help those trying to *have* children

On June 14, 2024, Scott posted his supposed [support for IVF on X](#). “Each of my 7 grandkids is a precious gift from God. But sometimes families need help. You can count on this grandpa to always protect IVF.” Really?

Just the day before, grandpa voted against [The Right to IVF Act](#) which provided federal protection for access to IVF treatment for patients and doctors and removed the states’ ability to usurp those protections. It would also have made IVF procedures more affordable by mandating coverage under employer-provided insurance. As [Newsweek](#) put it, “Republican Senator Rick Scott of Florida is facing furious backlash after touting his support for in vitro fertilization (IVF) only hours after voting against a bill that would have codified federal protections.”

And again. On September 17, 2024, he voted down [A bill to protect and expand nationwide access to fertility treatment, including in vitro fertilization.](#)”

Scott, lacking any moral core, always leans into the most politically advantageous stance du jour. The needs of Floridians and Americans across the country simply don’t count. Giving him a second term as senator will be devastating to Florida and the nation.

With [2,422,900 uninsured people](#) in Florida and abortion rights on the November ballot, the stakes truly are a matter of life and death.