

Biden Leans Into Health Care, Asking Voters To Trust Him Over Trump

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Angling to tap into strong support for the sweeping health law he helped pass 14 years ago, one of President Joe Biden's latest reelection strategies is to remind voters that former President Donald Trump tried to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

"Folks, he's coming for your health care, and we're not going to let it happen," Biden says of Trump in a [television and digital ad](#) out this month, part of a \$14 million investment in the handful of states expected to decide the presidency in November.

The new ad draws on the popularity of the ACA among independent voters and alludes to Biden's edge over Trump on health issues, which the current president hopes will help propel him to victory.

Swaying even a tiny percentage of voters could make a difference for Biden, said Kenneth Miller, an assistant professor of political science at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas.

"It will be so close," he said. "Any little thing can be a deciding factor."

Political experts say Biden is wise to draw attention to the ACA, which ended long-standing insurance practices denying coverage to people with preexisting conditions or charging them more — a change that is "popular across the partisan divide" and benefits about half of U.S. households, said Ashley Kirzinger, KFF's associate director of public opinion and survey research.

"Framing the ACA around those protections is a very smart move," she said.

A new [KFF survey](#) found Biden has an edge with independent voters when it comes to health care issues.

Independents trust Biden more than Trump to ensure access to affordable health insurance (47% to 22%) and maintain protections for people with preexisting conditions (47% to 23%).

Biden holds a smaller advantage over Trump in whom independents trust more to address high health care costs (39% to 26%). The survey also found the issue isn't a slam dunk for either candidate: About a third of independent voters said they trust neither Biden nor Trump to address costs.

Democrats are fighting to extend higher government subsidies for most people with ACA coverage, which were increased during the pandemic and are set to expire in 2025. They're also banking on outrage over the Supreme Court's 2022 decision striking down *Roe v. Wade*, and strict abortion bans that have followed in many Republican-led states, to juice Democratic turnout.

[The stakes](#) "could not be higher for Americans who rely on the Affordable Care Act," Biden campaign spokesperson Michael Tyler told reporters on a call this month.

The Trump campaign did not respond to a request for comment.

At least one Democratic-aligned super PAC is [also running health-related ads](#), including on Trump's appointment of Supreme Court justices who helped overturn the constitutional right to an abortion.

Barry Burden, director of the Elections Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said focusing on health care plays to Biden's strengths.

"Biden has been mired by voter concerns about inflation and immigration, where Republicans are preferred," he said. "Health care is more favorable territory where the Trump campaign does not have much of a defense to offer."

[Some recent polls have shown Trump leading](#) in most battleground states, with voters expressing pessimism about the economy.

But Trump is vulnerable on health care, Miller said. He unsuccessfully tried to repeal the ACA as president and has alluded to trying again if he returns to the White House. In November, [he declared](#) "Obamacare Sucks!" on social media, and in March he said he wants to improve the law without saying how.

"These ads are an effort to shake up the agenda," Miller said. "Biden needs more work reminding Democrat-leaning independent voters who probably voted for him in 2020 that he is the better choice."

Biden's ad also claims his health care policies have helped save Americans \$800 a year. The Biden administration [has said](#) that's how much 13 million people buying coverage on ACA insurance marketplaces saved in 2022.

The ad's primary claim, that 100 million people would be harmed if Trump eliminated preexisting condition protections, is misleading, said Robert Speel, director of the Public Policy Initiative at Penn State Behrend. That's because many would retain the protections under their coverage, particularly those on Medicare and employer-sponsored insurance.

“The ad looks too generic to have a significant impact on the outcome of the election, though it may get through to enough of the small universe of swing voters to have at least some potential impact on who wins Pennsylvania,” Speel said.

The KFF survey of 1,243 registered voters conducted April 23-May 1 had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

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