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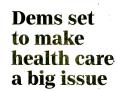
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Americans view ACA more positively after GOP repeal effort

James Anderson

DENVER - Republicans on the campaign trail this year will be eager to tout the potential benefits of their

tax-cut plan. Voters like Jeanine Limone Draut, a freelance technical writer in Denver, have something else in mind: health

have something eise in mind: health care.
Failed efforts by congressional Republicans last year to repeal former President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act not only exposed deep divisions within the party but also revealed core benefits of the law that millions of Americans now take for granted. Draut said she is tired of the attacks and the uncertainty surrounding the law's future.

"As a small-business owner, it just wreaks havoc on how you do business," Draut, an independent, said of the on-again, off-again repeal talk from Republicans." I don't know if either party has a solution. My vote is pretty closely tied to my livelihood."

Both parties are paying attention,

Both parties are paying attention, especially after a better-than-expected enrollment season under the health care law. Democrats especially have used health care to go on the attack, and the issue is coming up in congres-sional races in California, Colorado, Michigan, Washington and elsewhere. A Kaiser Family Foundation poll re-leased Friday found health care as the top issue voters want congressional candidates to address

candidates to address.
Enrollment was especially robust in many of the states that operate their own insurance marketplaces, where enrollment periods were longer than on the federal exchange.
California, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Maryland, New York and Vermont were among the states that saw enrollment approach or surpass 2017 levels. Minnesota's health insurance exchange set a record for private plans with an enrollment period that was more than two weeks shorter than in 2017.

California's state exchange, the na-California's state exchange, the na-tion's largest, has reported more than 1.2 million renewals for 2018 and an additional 342,000 new customers. Its 2018 enrollment period doesn't end until Wednesday, the same as New York's

Democrats say the level of consum-er interest presents a political oppor-

er interest presents a political oppor-tunity.

"We're definitely making it an is-sue," said Jason Crow, a Democrat who is challenging five-term Republi-can U.S. Rep. Mike Coffman in a sub-tuban Denver district.

Crow has criticized Coffman's vote for the GOP tax bill, which eliminated the tax penalty for people who don't ge health insurance. That move is ex-pected to undermine the individual in-surance market starting next year.

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More than 22,000 people enrolled last year for coverage on the state exchange in Coffman's district, which went for Hillary Clinton in 2016.

"People in our district recognize the progress we've made under health care. The fact that 20 million more people have health care matters — it matters a lot," Crow said. "And under Trump, we are now moving in the opdirection.

Coffman encountered hoots and See HEALTH CARE, Page 2A

