



## **BRAD PFAFF** **STATE SENATOR**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Wisconsin Farmers Deserve the Right to Repair**

If you've ever met a farmer, you know that they are an independent sort, who like to do things themselves – including repairing their own equipment.

Yet, our farmers face enormous barriers when trying to make repairs or choose where to repair their equipment. This is due to the extremely consolidated nature of the agricultural equipment market, with just a few major brands dominating sales, services, and parts. These large companies hold the tools, documentation, data, and parts necessary to repair their equipment. Many repairs on agricultural equipment, even minor repairs, cannot be done without this information companies withhold.

As a result of this monopolization and limited access to information, farmers cannot repair their own equipment and local, independent service providers cannot repair most equipment. This issue not only hurts our farmers, but harms our local businesses.

That's why I introduced Right to Repair legislation to support Wisconsin farmers and businesses. This consumer protection proposal creates a right to repair agricultural equipment by requiring manufacturers to make things like repair documentation, data, parts, and necessary tools available to owners and independent servicers at fair costs and terms—without surrendering trade secrets that would harm the manufacturers' legitimate intellectual property rights. By opening up these monopolistic repair arrangements, Wisconsin can support farmers struggling with rising costs, increase competition among service providers, and create jobs in our local communities.

Limiting the repair of equipment to a single business can lead to many negative consequences. For starters, it gives the company complete control on what to charge for these services and allows no room for fair, competitive pricing. On the other hand, farmers may experience delays in service when they can only use one service provider for their repairs. If many farmers need repairs at the same time, a lone service provider may not be able to address all of the repairs in a timely manner. Planting and harvesting are very time sensitive. This is a tremendous concern, because if our farmers don't have working equipment to manage their crops, their finances are at risk.

I believe that when a farmer purchases a piece of agricultural equipment, they purchase the right to choose who repairs it. It doesn't matter whether that is themselves, a local repair shop, or the dealership; what matters is that the decision is made by the farmer. They are experts regarding their operations and should have the autonomy to make the decision that is best for them and their bottom line. Manufacturers should make tools, documentation, data, and parts available to farmers and independent repair firms on fair terms and prices.

Dismantling these monopolistic repair arrangements is in the best interest of our farmers and rural communities, especially at a time when lowering costs and creating local jobs are greatly needed. Action is being taken by Wisconsin Attorney General Kaul and other state attorney generals to break up this consolidation, but my legislation would ensure the right of farmers to repair their own equipment is established in state law.

Our farmers deserve the right to repair, it's time we fix this for them.

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*Senator Brad Pfaff represents the 32<sup>nd</sup> Senate District, which includes La Crosse County, Vernon County, and parts of Monroe and Trempealeau County.*