



BRAD PFAFF
STATE SENATOR

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The Economics of Child Care Do Not Work

The economics of child care do not work. Parents cannot afford its high cost; yet, we struggle to find child care providers and get people into the profession.

Something has got to give, because this is unsustainable for Wisconsin families.

Accessible, affordable child care is a bridge to a higher quality of life.

Unfortunately, many residents of western Wisconsin live in child care deserts. To access child care, they may be forced to drive great distances, while in some cases, they may have no access at all.

This puts a significant strain on working families, as it limits both employment and educational opportunities. Wisconsinites know this is more than just a child care crisis, it's also a workforce crisis.

Too many people, especially women, are not in the workforce or work reduced hours, due to child care concerns. Other hidden costs that businesses face include job recruitment, retention, and productivity. It's hard for a worker to focus exclusively on their work if they are concerned about their child's wellbeing.

As businesses struggle to find employees, we need to do everything we can to help parents enter and stay in the workforce. Even 20 years ago the cost of child care was high with my wife and I paying over \$1000 a month for our two kids. Sadly, the cost has only risen since then.

As a state, we can do something to help our working families. I support permanently establishing the Child Care Counts Program in this year's state budget, which will continue to provide financial stability for Wisconsin child care providers. Child Care Counts ensures providers can keep the lights on, pay their employees, and manage the overall cost of child care for families.

This program has kept many of our child care providers alive since the start of COVID, but without it, many of these child care programs would be forced to close their doors. Without Child Care Counts, as many as 25% of child care providers in Wisconsin have said they would close permanently and 60% would be forced to raise tuition, increasing the already high financial burden for working families.

At a time when our businesses are struggling to find workers, this is a common sense policy that should receive bipartisan support.

This policy is good for our kids and good for our economy, but there is no one-size-fits-all approach to solve the child care crisis. Every family and community is unique. I understand that it's going to take a collaborative approach that recognizes each community may have different child care needs to address.

I'm proud to support child care in the Driftless Region, and will continue to seek solutions to make it more accessible and affordable.

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Senator Brad Pfaff represents the 32nd Senate District, which includes La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford, and southern Monroe County.