



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Fighting Food Insecurity**

It seems hard to fathom; how could there be people here in Wisconsin – America’s Dairyland – that go to bed hungry?

Sadly, food insecurity is real. This is not just an urban, big-city problem, it affects cities and rural areas alike. It affects both adults and children.

That is why I was disappointed the legislature’s Joint Finance Committee recently chose to exclude \$30 million in funding for food assistance programs from the state budget. This funding would have supported the purchase of locally grown and produced foods at a time when many Wisconsinites need it.

Access to locally grown and produced food makes Wisconsinites healthier. Fresh fruits and vegetables provide for quality, nutritious meals that improve health and reduce the chances of obesity, diabetes, and other health conditions.

Unfortunately, our food assistance programs in western Wisconsin increasingly need more help. While there is significant nutritional value in local produce, food banks are struggling to get enough donations and funding to support their work.

Building greater connections between Wisconsin agriculture and food assistance organizations is a win-win; a win for our farmers and a win for food banks who want to provide locally produced food to hardworking Wisconsinites who need it.

This extends to our schools as well. When we connect agricultural producers with local school districts, we support our kids.

Students learn best on a full stomach. That is why it is vital that we not only support farm-to-school programs, but also school lunches and breakfasts for all students. The nutritional value students get when they eat local produce provides them with greater opportunities to grow and learn.

Funding food assistance programs and schools make our communities stronger, but we can do more to improve the health of our citizens.

BadgerCare expansion would expand access to health care for those who need it, while lowering premiums and the cost of care in our state. Too often, residents of western Wisconsin experience costly medical care and prescription drug prices or fail to get the care they need due to these high prices.

Expanding BadgerCare makes sense for both health care and the economy. Wisconsin will save money, while Wisconsinites will have greater access to the care they need.

When we combat food insecurity, support public schools, and expand BadgerCare, we make our region an even better place to live.

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

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