



BRAD PFAFF

STATE SENATOR

Focusing on Pocketbook Issues

By: State Senator Brad Pfaff (D-Onalaska)

Everything seems to be getting more expensive. Necessities like food, housing, and healthcare continue to rise in price while wages remain stagnant. Recent polling shows how widespread these concerns are: 89% of voters are concerned about the state of the economy, and 95% about inflation.

While I disagree with many of President Trump's policies, I was hopeful he would succeed in his promise to reduce costs. Unfortunately, more than a year into his second term, his focus appears to be on everything except lowering costs.

Sadly, those in Washington, DC, are more interested in providing tax handouts to billionaires, investigating political enemies, and building golden ballrooms than addressing the problems affecting working people.

According to the United Way's recent ALICE Report, 35% of Wisconsin households struggle to make ends meet—a Coulee Region family of four requires over \$65,000 annually to cover a basic survival budget (housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, technology, taxes, and a 10% miscellaneous category).

At a La Crosse Area Development Corporation meeting, a speaker noted that the median purchase price of a single-family home in La Crosse County has increased from \$229,000 in 2020 to \$314,000 in 2025, nearly \$100,000. Rising home costs, doubled interest rates, and higher insurance rates make purchasing a home nearly impossible for far too many. Statewide, four of five voters report concern about housing affordability.

The mismanaged national tariff policy has made groceries more expensive. Reports show Americans paid 96% of the \$200 billion in tariff "revenue" generated by trade wars last year. Farmers are under tremendous pressure as input costs for fuel, fertilizer, and equipment rise while many foreign markets have either closed or shrunk.

Prioritizing partisan politics, Congressional Republicans allowed health insurance costs to rise for the self-employed and for those purchasing coverage on the Affordable Care Act marketplace. In some cases, Wisconsinites have seen premiums increase dramatically after enhanced subsidies expired, with one small-business owner's monthly premium rising from about \$50 to \$500, a \$5,000 increase over the year.



BRAD PFAFF

STATE SENATOR

Republicans control the US House, the US Senate, and the White House, yet the affordability promises they made on the campaign trail have faded into oblivion.

Unlike those in DC, I refuse to accept inaction. In addition to supporting legislation to eliminate taxes on tips, I voted for the 2025-26 budget, which reduced retirement income taxes, removed sales tax on utility bills, and lowered individual income tax burdens by \$600 million annually.

I know more can be done to make child care—often costing more than in-state college tuition—more affordable. I supported direct payments to providers to help ease costs for families, and continue to advocate for additional legislation to ease financial burdens, including increasing the minimum wage, which has been frozen at \$7.25 since 2009.

To lower housing costs, I've worked in a bipartisan manner to provide incentives for retrofitting and rehabilitating existing buildings and commercial sites while reducing regulations that drive up housing costs. I also authored legislation to ensure that people, not corporations, buy and own homes in our communities.

Finally, we must reduce prescription drug costs and prevent pharmaceutical companies from predatory pricing. I introduced legislation to cap insulin costs, create a prescription drug affordability board, and increase the transparency of pharmacy benefit managers.

Wisconsinites deserve leaders who focus on lowering costs, strengthening local economies, and putting working families ahead of political gamesmanship. I will keep working across party lines and fighting for practical solutions until every family in our state has a fair shot at affordable housing, health care, and a secure future.