

# **GOP leaders reject Evers' call to take up \$1 billion workforce development plan**

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GOP legislative leaders were quick to dismiss Gov. Tony Evers' special session call to take up a \$1 billion workforce development package.

Among other things, Evers wants the Legislature on Sept. 20 to take up his call to pump \$365 million into programs to support child care providers. The Dem gov warned of an "economic calamity" if the state doesn't step in to help child care providers, saying it would result in people leaving the workforce because they lack options to watch their kids while they're on the job.

But Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, yesterday called the special session call a "stunt" and the proposal the gov laid out "nothing more than a rehash of Tony Evers' tax and spend budget."

He said the child care subsidies aren't sustainable long term and knocked the gov for vetoing the bulk of the income tax cut Republicans put in the 2023-25 state budget.

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"Our priority when we return in September will be to give Gov. Evers another chance to fix his mistake by signing a middle-class tax cut," Vos said.

Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu, R-Oostburg, said his caucus wants to address the state's workforce shortage without growing government.

"The best way to fix Wisconsin's workforce shortage is to create a competitive tax structure that will attract talent and private investment to our state," LeMahieu

said.

Evers' proposal includes:

\*More than \$340 million, including \$38.9 million in Temporary Assistance for Need Families fund for the Child Care Counts Program, which provides subsidies to providers.

\*\$22.3 million for the Partner Up! Program, which helps employers purchase spots for their employees with existing child care providers. It would reallocate \$15 million that Republicans put into the Joint Finance Committee's supplemental appropriation for a grant program.

\*\$243.4 million to create a paid family and medical leave program. Employers and employees would fund the program going forward with a payroll contribution with the aim to have it self-sustaining by 2026.

\*\$66.4 million for the UW System to support general operations.

\*more than \$197.3 million to construct a new engineering building at UW-Madison.

\*more than \$40 million over the biennium for the Wisconsin Technical College System.

\*\$17.3 million for the Wisconsin Grants program, which provides college students need-based financial aid.

\*\$100 million for the Workforce Innovation Grant Program to address health care-related workforce challenges.

\*\$60 million to address the healthcare workforce shortage solutions.

\*\$16 million to address the teacher shortage.

\*authorizing state agencies and local governments, including schools, to rehire retirees who are collecting their pensions. It would include restrictions such as ensuring retirees didn't have an agreement in place to return to work when they left their public job.

Republicans rejected many of the initiatives in Evers' state budget plan, including

the child care subsidies, the paid family and medical leave program, and increased state aid for the UW System.

Evers said it is “survival time” for the child care industry in Wisconsin and predicted centers would close without state intervention.

He also argued the consequences of failing to act would fall solely on Republicans.

This is the 13th special session that Evers has called. While he has the power to call one, he can't force the GOP-controlled Legislature to act. Typically, GOP leaders have quickly gaveled in and out the special sessions Evers has called without taking action.

Evers predicted this call will be different because of what's at stake with the state's workforce shortage, particularly if employees can't find adequate child care.

“Because at the end of the day, I know that Republicans do not want to be responsible for farmers, hospitals, schools and other businesses in their district not being able to find work because their parents can't find care for their kids.” Evers said.

See the release [here](#).