

# Main Street Alliance: Members react to Governor's budget address, hosts statewide tour stop at member business Wonderstate Coffee

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**MADISON**— Main Street Alliance and our 1,200 Wisconsin members were eager to learn more about Governor Evers' budget proposal last night as the process kicked off with the Joint Finance Committee.

On Monday over 70 Main Street Alliance member businesses from every corner of Wisconsin gathered for our Day of Action to discuss small business policy matters. We met with 55 legislative offices, the Lieutenant Governor, and the office of the Attorney General. In those meetings, we called for Paid Family Medical Leave, Badgercare expansion with a public option, and Child Care Counts extension. We are pleased that all three of our top priorities are included in the Governor's budget and we look forward to working with legislators on both sides of the aisle to get these common-sense policies included in the upcoming biennial budget.

## **Reactions from MSA Small Business Owners:**

**Becky Cooper**, owner of Bounce Milwaukee said "We need badgercare expansion, with a public option. Our family has experienced periods of being uninsured due to the high cost of private insurance. Nearly 100,000 Wisconsin residents would receive health insurance if we took the expansion. Over a billion dollars would come in to help WI meet our needs for our state. On top of all of that, the benefits cliff where workers cannot take more hours in order to remain eligible for their health insurance is a huge barrier to addressing our workforce challenges. Expanding Badgercare is one of the best ways we can address it."

“The inclusion of \$340 million for Child Care Counts by the Governor in his budget acknowledges that we cannot continue to expect parents and early childhood educators to absorb the entire cost burden to educate our children from six weeks to five years. That child care is workforce development and education combined”, said **Corrine Hendrickson** of Corrine’s Little Explorers, a childcare provider in New Glarus.

“I am cautiously optimistic that our legislators will also understand that connection to stabilize the industry and invest accordingly so that parents can access care, the educators are paid better and employers can recruit and retain the skilled employees they need to succeed,” she added.

**Irene Strohbeen** of Strohbeen and Associates in Appleton added: “I am very heartened by the total inclusion in the Governor’s budget of Paid Family Medical Leave. It’s a great starting point. I hope that the legislature includes this in their version of the budget. It is essential for Wisconsin to remain competitive for young professionals, especially among the other midwestern states.”

Governor Evers, Lt. Gov Sara Rodriguez, DWD Secretary Pechacek, WEDC CEO Missy Hughes, Sen. Brad Pfaff, and Rep. Oldenburg joined MSA WI Leadership Team member **TJ Semanchin** and Wonderstate Coffee yesterday for a tour of their Viroqua Roastery and to talk about the impact that the proposed budget would have on their rural business.

“We appreciated the Governor and his Administration’s time and focus on a rural small business and that our priorities are reflected in his budget. We hope that we’re able to get this done through the budgeting process. We appreciate the governor’s commitment to workforce development. In a promising sign, both our local Republican and Democrat legislators joined us for this important discussion. Thank you Sen. Pfaff and Rep. Oldenburg for joining us for this important discussion on the need to invest in child care, badgercare expansion, and Paid Family Medical Leave,” said TJ.

“We look forward to working across party lines to ensure these provisions are included in the final budget. That is what small business needs now,” said Shawn Phetteplace, Midwest Regional Manager for Main Street Alliance.

[Pictures from the roundtable here.](#)