

Rep. Shankland: Statement on Assembly's passage of 2023-2025 biennial budget

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MADISON— Following today's session of the Wisconsin State Assembly, Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) released the following statement regarding the Assembly's passage of the 2023-2025 Biennial Budget:

"Our state has a historic \$7 billion budget surplus. This budget was a golden opportunity for Republicans and Democrats to come together and deliver transformational change for the people of Wisconsin by using the surplus to make life easier and better for working families, seniors, and kids. Though the budget included some provisions that I support, I'm very disappointed that it cuts UW System funding, defunds a critical child care program, and prioritizes tax giveaways to the wealthy over meaningful tax relief to middle and working class families.

"We should have addressed Wisconsin's pressing workforce challenges by supporting our childcare providers through Child Care Counts, a vital program that has kept the doors of child care providers open, ensuring parents have the child care they need to stay in the workforce or enter it. We could have provided comprehensive tax relief targeted to the thousands of hard-working, middle-class and working families struggling to make ends meet. Our K-12 public schools, technical colleges, and UW campuses deserved more state support to provide students with the resources they need to achieve the American Dream. We should have funded the Office of School Safety to ensure our kids and educators are safe at school and ensured our county conservationists received an increase, not a cut.

"Unfortunately, instead of using our historic surplus to invest in these priorities, Republican legislators chose to direct a \$20 million handout to the 11 Wisconsin

residents who earn \$75 million or more a year. It's shocking to me that they could not find \$2.2 million for the Office of School Safety to keep its 24/7 confidential reporting system for schools running, but this was a priority to them, and it is unacceptable that they did not have the will to invest in Child Care Counts. Throughout this budget process, I have heard from hundreds of constituents and economic development and business organizations about the importance of funding child care support in our state budget. They underscored it was their number one priority. Like them, I expected and called for action on this vital need.

"However, with the passage of this budget, many child care providers will be forced to close their doors or raise tuition, placing even more strain on working families. Some workers may be priced out of child care altogether and leave the workforce or cut their hours, affecting our small businesses and major employers. The [ripple effect](#) on our child care providers, families, business community, and local economy will be demoralizing, truly countering our efforts to strengthen our state's workforce when we will [lose 130,000 workers](#) in the workforce by 2030.

"So does cutting the UW System, our state's foremost engine for workforce and economic growth, burdening our campuses across Wisconsin with a [\\$60 million deficit](#) by the end of the school year, with UW-Stevens Point projected to have a [\\$5.6 million deficit](#). I'm deeply concerned about the impacts of these budget cuts to our college campuses, especially in our rural communities, and fear that without additional funding, our campuses could close their doors in the future, devastating communities like Stevens Point, River Falls, Wausau, and Platteville. That is why I voted no on the state budget. This budget leaves too many people behind - *during a record surplus*.

"As always, I stand ready and willing to work with my colleagues across the aisle to solve the problems keeping the people of Wisconsin up at night, from thoughtful and responsible tax relief and investing in childcare and our workers to supporting our public education institutions at all levels. I only wish we could have done so today."