

Rep. Vining: In the year of mental health, Republicans have failed our families

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MADISON – The Joint Committee on Finance approved a motion today that removes 545 of Governor Tony Evers’ proposals from the 2023-2025 budget, and not only blocked the ability of Democrats to reintroduce these items, but also silenced the Democrats from being able to talk about them. In response, Rep. Robyn Vining (D-Wauwatosa), the Ranking Democrat on the Committee on Mental Health, and Substance Use Disorder Prevention, issued the following statement:

“Governor Tony Evers declared 2023 the Year of Mental Health stating, ‘The state of mental health in Wisconsin is a quiet, burgeoning crisis that I believe will have catastrophic consequences for generations if we don’t treat it with the urgency it requires. Mental and behavioral health is as much a health issue as it is an economic one: it affects kids in the classroom; it affects workers being able to join and stay in our workforce; it affects whether folks are able to stay in safe housing or have economic security; it affects folks’ ability to take care of and provide for their family and loved ones.’ Governor Evers then proposed critical mental health investments in his proposed budget.”

“Today, Republicans on the Joint Committee on Finance slashed every single one of Governor Evers’ investments in the mental health of our youth. Further, Republicans blocked Democrats on the Joint Committee on Finance from being able to reintroduce any of these items for the remainder of the budget process, and-silenced Democrats from being able to talk about them in committee.”

“At a time when Wisconsinites’ mental health across the state is in crisis—all ages, stages, economic statuses, and geographic locations—we need all sides of the aisle

to come together and resolve to pass significant mental health investments. At a time when we have both a massive state surplus, and a tremendous rainy day fund, the Wisconsin legislature can't afford to turn its back on the people—Wisconsinites' mental health is too important. Wisconsinites are too important.”

“Now is the time to make critical investments to improve mental health for all Wisconsinites. We must continue this critical work as a legislature to invest in mental healthcare, so that when we move forward as a state, we move forward *together*.”