

Sen. Roys: Defunding and deregulating will not make our children better off

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MADISON — Today, Republicans introduced a handful of bills aiming to distract from their failure to invest in child care. In the state budget, GOP politicians refused to fund Gov. Evers' \$347 million continuation of the essential Child Care Counts program to stabilize Wisconsin's childcare industry. Sen. Kelda Roys (D-Madison) issued the following statement:

“For months, we heard from child care providers, parents, and business owners who told us that ending Child Care Counts would result in devastating closures of childcare centers and the loss of childcare for thousands of families across the state. Gov. Evers and legislative Democrats took those calls seriously and voted to fully fund Child Care Counts. Republicans refused to do so, allocating zero dollars to this essential program despite our record \$7 billion surplus.

“In the two months since the budget was passed, child care centers across the state are closing, early childhood educators are leaving the field, and parents are facing significant increases in the cost of care.

“Now, Republican politicians have unveiled their “grand plan” on childcare – do nothing to attract and retain early childhood educators and deregulate childcare centers to allow more children per teacher.

“From a parent's perspective, these bills are reckless and out of touch. Deregulating the industry to allow more children in classrooms might work on a spreadsheet but not if you've actually spent time with children – imagine being responsible for nine two-year-olds. This is not a sustainable or safe practice for our children, or our early

childhood educators.

“This is an unserious attempt by a flailing, illegitimate majority hellbent on preserving their power, at the expense of helping the people of our state. I cannot wait for next November, when Wisconsinites may have a fair chance to elect legislators that are interested in helping solve the crisis of childcare access and affordability, rather than creating a less safe world for our children and teachers.”