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Republicans Strip Crucial Measures from Evers Budget

On Thursday, May 9th, Republicans on the powerful Joint Committee on Finance removed more than one hundred legislative pieces from Governor Evers' budget. They stripped measures that have been shown by recent polls to have broad support across party lines in Wisconsin. Some 70% of people in Wisconsin want to accept the Medicaid expansion that would insure 80,000 more people, but Assembly Speaker Robin Vos refuses to do so.

The move is plainly political. There is no rational explanation for refusing to expand Medicaid. It would give potentially life-saving care to tens of thousands of Wisconsinites. It would save Wisconsin \$100 million per year. It would lower individual market premiums across Wisconsin for those *not* on Medicaid. If we had taken the expansion in 2014, Wisconsin would have already saved 1.1 *billion* dollars. And yet, the Affordable Care Act is a law crafted by Democrats. To expand Medicaid could be seen as giving Democrats a win- something the Republican leadership in Wisconsin simply will not allow to happen.

Republican leaders in Wisconsin only ever think about one thing: the next election. It has only been four months since Tony Evers took the oath of office as Governor of Wisconsin, and yet their minds are already on the 2022 Wisconsin gubernatorial election. Anything that could give Governor Evers a positive talking point in three years' time will be excised and blocked. Instead of trying to do what is right for the people of Wisconsin, they have doggedly pursued political wins in an effort to maintain power so that they may satiate their corporate benefactors- who will in turn continue to bankroll them so that they can stay in power. It's a terrible cycle, and they are losing sight of what their purpose is as legislators.

The statewide vote in November of 2018 was clear: Wisconsinites support Tony Evers' vision for Wisconsin. That vision is reflected in the budget. Governor Evers has been traveling the state extensively to hold listening sessions and his budget is a direct expression of what the people of Wisconsin want. That is why we are calling it The People's Budget. For the first time in at least eight years, the budget will reflect what everyday people want, and is not filled with carve outs and handouts to the Republican donor base.

Governor Evers has a positive vision for Wisconsin. His budget re-prioritizes public education, clean water, taxpayer protections, and more. Republicans held listening sessions across the state as well. Unfortunately, they seem poised to ignore what the people want rather than implement it.

I am sure that there are some Republicans in the Wisconsin Legislature that are willing to discuss a compromise on Medicaid Expansion. Indeed, State Senator Luther Olsen recently has said as much. I suspect there are others. Unfortunately for the people of Wisconsin, Speaker Vos and Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald are only thinking of the next election and are refusing to have any discussions about a compromise. It is one of the great shames of Wisconsin today that 80,000 people have to go without insurance because two legislators are putting politics over what is right.

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