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STATE SENATOR

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Sen Pfaff Column: Investing in the Care Economy Helps Families of All Ages

One measure of a strong community is how we raise our kids and how we care for our elders. One thing nearly everyone has in common is we all have an older person in our lives who helped raise us, put food on our table, and shared our most memorable moments. Once those special people reach an age when daily tasks get more difficult and they need somebody to lean on, we want to be there for them like they were for us.

Every working family wants to give their parents, godparents, and elders the help they need to retire with dignity and comfort. These days, that's becoming a lot more difficult. I've been talking to care providers across the district who express genuine concern about staffing shortages at local long-term care facilities. In rural areas like ours, this is a big, big issue—because as we know, there are sparse options to begin with.

A working family in Cashton shouldn't have to drive 45 minutes to La Crosse to find quality long-term care for their elders. Unfortunately, this has become a reality for so many folks living outside of the city because assisted living facilities and nursing homes are closing their doors at an unprecedented rate.

There are simple investments we can make at the state level to help fix this problem. For example, I support Governor Evers' proposed \$500 tax credit for families to use on child and long-term care. This will help make sure nobody gets priced out of these essential services. Wisconsin can also support caregivers by accepting federal expansion for Badgercare, which would lower the out-of-pocket cost for consumers and keep the doors open for facilities across the state. Expanding Badgercare is the only responsible decision for Wisconsin. Unfortunately, once again, partisan politics are getting in the way. We have to move beyond all that.

Investing in the Care Economy also creates new economic opportunities for working families. When a new facility can open, or an existing one can expand—we create good-paying jobs and help people work and live right here at home.

We're all taught growing up to respect our older generation and give back to them when they need it most. It's time to start looking at elder care as a utility—a common good that every working family should be able to afford. I will continue to advocate for seniors, health care professionals, and families who believe that everyone deserves the right to live with dignity at every stage of life.

MEDIA NOTE: See email attachment for an official photo of Senator Pfaff

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