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Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu  
Room 211 South  
State Capitol  
PO Box 7882  
Madison, WI 53707

Assembly Speaker Robin Vos  
Room 217 West  
State Capitol  
PO Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708

April 15, 2021

Dear Majority Leader LeMahieu and Speaker Vos,

I write today to implore you to expand BadgerCare as proposed in Governor Evers's 2021 – 2023 Budget. Expanding Medicaid will guarantee access to health care for thousands of Wisconsinites and generate over \$1 billion in savings for Wisconsin. Republican leaders in our state have repeatedly allowed partisan ideology to undermine Medicaid expansion at the expense of thousands of low-income Wisconsinites. As we turn the page on the COVID-19 pandemic, I urge you to accept this common-sense proposal to protect the health of our citizens and bolster our economy.

The pandemic has underscored the importance of access to high quality and affordable health care. Medicaid expansion will guarantee access to health care coverage for an additional 90,000 Wisconsinites. Studies have demonstrated that expanding Medicaid improves health outcomes and reduces premature deaths.<sup>1</sup> People in states that have expanded Medicaid are more likely to receive regular check-ups, including screenings for potentially life-threatening conditions such as heart disease and cancer. Medicaid expansion could also help combat the opioid epidemic in our state by expanding access to mental health and substance abuse treatment. By failing to expand Medicaid, you are undermining the health of thousands of people in Wisconsin at the expense of our taxpayers.

Refusing to expand Medicaid will cost Wisconsin over \$1 billion. The American Rescue Plan, which President Biden signed into law in February, provides additional federal funding to states that newly expand Medicaid to adults earning up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level. Wisconsin stands to receive an additional \$1 billion in federal funding if our state leaders adopt Medicaid expansion.<sup>2</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented costs for our state's economy and health care system. As we work to recover from the pandemic, we cannot afford to leave this funding on the table.

It is time to put partisanship aside and invest in the health and economic wellbeing of Wisconsin. Wisconsin is among just 12 states in the nation that have failed to fully expand Medicaid under

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nber.org/papers/w26081>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.thewheelerreport.com/wheeler\\_docs/files/0311211fb.pdf](http://www.thewheelerreport.com/wheeler_docs/files/0311211fb.pdf)

the Affordable Care Act, even though it is popular among Democratic and Republican voters. Even many Republican governors, including our neighbors in Indiana and Iowa, have put their people before politics to expand Medicaid. I encourage you to follow their lead and do the right thing by expanding BadgerCare and accepting the federal funds available to Wisconsin.

Your refusal to expand Medicaid in Wisconsin is costing lives and taxpayer dollars. I urge you to work with Governor Evers to expand Medicaid and ensure people in Wisconsin have access to health care when they need it most.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Kind". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ron Kind  
Member of Congress

CC: Governor Tony Evers