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[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** You've got your finger on the trigger.

[00:00:01] **Unidentified** What happened? You want to know what?

[00:00:13] **Speaker 1** Sometimes you get really? You have great people. I think you're all never going to get. You're not in your best. So to do that, you don't want to have to go through. As a matter. Oh, yeah. Want to hear. So, Byron, you're not going to get out of. That's right. Yeah. Now Ukraine. I never. So have. I was. Today. Right now. I'm trying to find out. Yeah. That. Got. Now. You. Yeah. They are.

[00:03:34] **Unidentified** Kind of. I haven't seen.

[00:03:44] **Speaker 1** You know. Well. I finally asked her last night. What's going to happen there? I know. So how does that happen? I think our. Well. Hi.

[00:06:14] **Speaker 2** Good morning, everybody, and thank you for joining us today. I also want to thank the members of the cabinet who are here with us this morning, as well as my Democratic colleagues from the other wing, especially our champions of the Joint Committee on Finance, who have been putting in tireless hours to send me the best darn budget possible. So thank you for your work. And I also want to thank the folks from the state Budget office and from the building commission staff and of course, the people that work with me in the governor's office. So how about a round of applause for. So during my first term as governor, I signed two biennial budgets that made generational investments in key areas and that really made a difference. And while using my broad constitutional veto authority to improve those budgets sent to me by the Republicans in the legislature. But we have accomplished a lot over the last four years. We've invested in our shared priorities, including schools and education, delivering tax relief for working families, increasing access to affordable health care, fixing our roads and bridges, supporting our small businesses, veterans, farmers and agricultural industries, expanding heights, high speed Internet, addressing climate change and protecting our natural resources, as well as bolstering our workforce to maintain economic momentum. So where do we start? After 30 years of deficits, we have had three consecutive fiscal years with a positive balance in our general fund, and we ended the fiscal year with a record setting, a record setting $4.6 billion balance. We paid down various debts. We have had the lowest unemployment rate in the state's history, and we've had the highest number of people employed ever in our state history. Interfaith Rainy day Fund is at the highest level ever, a record $1.8 billion, which is more than five times what it was when I took this office. We began this budget process with historic opportunity and with that historic responsibility not to be careless, but to stay well within our means while investing in needs that have long been neglected in many ways. In many ways, Republicans in the legislature have failed to meet this historic moment. They sent the budget back to my desk without making critical investments in key areas that they know and have acknowledged are essential to the success of our state. And they did so providing no real justifications, any kind of substantive debate or any meaningful alternative. That decision is to put it simply because of the abdication of duty. Since day one, my budgets have always been about pragmatic solutions like state funding for high speed broadband, like affordable and accessible child care, like substantial categorical aid increases for our schools, investing in our University of Wisconsin system and our technical college providing targeted tax relief for caregivers, parents, seniors and veterans and their spouses, expanding badger care and paid family leave, legalizing and taxing marijuana just like alcohol. Folks, these are not controversial concepts at all. In light of these short sighted decisions. There are those who would have me vetoed the entire budget and send the legislature back to the drawing board and ask them to start from scratch. Be doing this entire budget would mean abandoning the priorities and ideas that I've spent four years advocating for. It would mean leaving schools and communities in the lurch after right away securing historic increases for the first time in years. It would mean forging the first Republican effort to address pay fors after years of action. If this budget and this budget includes $125 million to.

[00:10:48] **Unidentified** Address that 3.4.

[00:10:56] **Speaker 2** It would mean forfeiting one of the largest investments in state history and workforce housing and $525 million investment in expanding access. Gaining access to affordable housing statewide, which is a critical starting point. If we want to even begin to address our state's workforce challenges in the long term. And it would mean turning our back on our justice system workforce, our state workforce, tourism industry, our farmers and producers, and our veterans, among others. So we are here today because while Republicans in the legislature might be perfectly comfortable advocating the duty, we share a lot, my focus has always been and always will be, the people of the state to whom I have pledged to always try to do the right thing. This is a pledge. This is a pledge. Why? I am enacting the budget with substantial improvements today. This budget provides a historic increase to support our local communities statewide, representing a generational increase while allowing for future growth and ensuring the safety of Aukey and the county of all. I don't face an imminent fiscal cliff under our bipartisan bipartisan compromise. Most municipalities across our state will see more than a 20% increase in. This month. It also builds on our work to do what's best for our kids. And with a historic budget and investments in K through 12 statewide. Now, I know that this isn't everything that I proposed in my budget. Far from it. But this budget does maintain two thirds funding and with revenue limit increasing for the upcoming school year, we are providing more than $1 billion in spendable revenue for K through 12 schools. That's money that can be used in the classroom for teachers and kids. This includes a $325 per people revenue limit adjustment in each year of the biennium. And while I've been able to, you know, and while I have been able to unilaterally over the last four years, increased aid per student by over $300, we know that we will still have a lot of work to do and ensure that state investments can keep up with inflation. So I have also used my broad veto authority to provide school districts with predictable long term increases for the foreseeable future. The budget also provides $50 million to improve reading and literacy outcomes for K through 12 students and $30 million over the biennium to continue to support school based mental health services statewide. Send your mental health folks. We'll also race 33.3% reimbursement for special education and increase the lower revenue ceiling from $10000 to $11000 per student. This budget, with the help of my veto, will provide $15 million in additional support for US states child care providers. And by the way, part of having a strong workforce is investing in higher education. So I'm glad that the Republicans took my veto threat seriously when they promised to gut our University of Wisconsin system by more than $32 million and one point even threatening to cut hundreds of millions of dollars and decided at the end to provide an opportunity for the UW system to retain the $32 million in this final budget. But I also want to be clear Republicans decision to prolong their decade long war on higher education by failing to provide meaningful investments in our University of Wisconsin system and our technical colleges is shortsighted, misguided and wrong for the workforce, wrong for our economy and our state. So we're going to give the UW system the ability to keep 188 positions working on diversity, equity and inclusion. Orleans Saints continue to be competitive in recruiting and retaining talent as students and workers. Additionally, I was disappointed that Republicans chose to reject my middle class tax cut plan, which would have provided $1.2 billion in tax relief. But using my broad veto authority, I'm doing what I can to ensure that tax relief goes to working families who need help affording rising costs, not the wealthiest taxpayers in Wisconsin. And I am pleased that this budget provides substantial and well deserved increase in compensation for our correctional officers, youth counselors, psychiatric care technicians, assistant district attorneys and public defenders. It also provides sizable investments in tourism, marketing and advertising, and includes resources necessary to continue our work, fixing our roads and making sure our infrastructure is built for our workforce and economy in the 21st and 21st century. Now, even as I'm glad that the legislature join me in making critical investments in several key areas, the fact remains that this budget remains imperfect and incomplete. Of urgent concern to me as governor is that while this budget makes some critical investments to help support some portions of our state work saved by state workforce, Republicans returned this budget to me without critical components of my comprehensive plan to address workforce challenges that plague our state. So today I'm enacting this budget and giving the legislature a second chance, using my broad constitutional veto authority to ensure ample state resources are readily available for the legislature to complete their work on this budget and do the right thing to focus on real solutions for urgent and for the urgent challenges facing our state. For starters, the legislature must make substantial investments necessary to stabilize our state's child care industry and ensure child care is affordable and accessible so that we can keep parents in our workforce. Failing to do so will be a disaster for employers, our workforce and our state's economy. And yes, that means the legislature should also expand paid family leave and invest state resources in high speed Internet and make substantial investments in education at every level, including our higher education Institute institutions. These efforts, along with other key provisions I included in my proposed by in your budget, are essential for maintaining our economic momentum and retaining and recruiting workers across the state. So while I sign this budget today, I urge members of the Legislature to continue their work on this budget throughout the remainder of this legislative session so that we can both Thursday's workforce, maintain our economic momentum and most importantly, do the right thing for Wisconsin. So thank you very much. And now I'll hand things over to our more junior executive director of the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority to talk more about how this budget, roads and access to affordable states save our housing and communities across the state.

[00:20:12] **Speaker 3** I'm just going to repeat $525 million. That was in for wasn't. Today is a great day in Wisconsin. We are making a historic investment. Thanks to our incredible governor and a bipartisan collection of legislators making this unprecedented $525 million investment in workforce housing and certain across. The Workforce Housing Bill package will empower wider to make the necessary investments in infrastructure, in rehabilitation loans, and in supporting the development of affordable housing. That will move US steps closer to assuring that everyone in Wisconsin has access to the safe, stable, affordable housing that they deserve. I am going to take this opportunity to thank Governor Evers again for his unwavering support of housing as a core human need, as well as Representative Brooks and Senator Quinn and the many authors of the Workforce housing package for spearheading efforts to help to address our housing needs. This action today affirms our position that affordable housing is truly a bipartisan concern because we are in a housing crisis. All people, all people across our state deserve to have access to affordable housing options because they need it to thrive. We stand ready and wider to implement these new programs that will enable more people in Wisconsin to have an affordable place to call home. Thank you and congratulations to all of us. Well. And now please welcome Secretary of the Department of Agriculture Secretary Greg Thompson. Bhagat Singh there, the transportation.

[00:22:49] **Speaker 4** I think the guy just got promoted over. Thank you. Executive Director more. Thank you, Governor Evers. I am really excited to be able to be here with all of you today and recognize the accomplishments and talk about the great work that we're going to be able to do with all with everything that's in this new budget. The 2023 2025 biennial budget builds on all that we have accomplished together over the past four years. Previous administrations, administrations and legislatures neglected to invest in transportation for decades, and that neglect showed in our deteriorated roads. Many people here in this room today I know, will remember that transportation budget held up the overall budget for years and years. This is our third budget in a row. We're investing new ongoing revenue into our transportation system. One more year commitment to transportation combined with the investments made over the past two budgets, as well as the bipartisan infrastructure law, have allowed our department to deliver a robust construction program. With improvements being felt by residents. Throughout the state. Since 2019, we've improved more than 5800 miles of roads and nearly 1600 bridges across Wisconsin. This budget will continue our progress toward improving our infrastructure, whether that's reconstructing the bottleneck bridge in Superior, a vital connector between Wisconsin, Minnesota or make needs making needed repairs to the Great Lynskey Memorial Bridge in Broward County, or fixing any number of the miles of highways and bridges in between. This budget will allow our department to continue making real progress in our effort to build a 21st century infrastructure that meets the needs of a 21st century workforce and economy. It's vital that all levels of government work together to build Wisconsin's infrastructure for the future. And that's why the shared revenue increases, in addition to the transportation budget within this budget, are so critically important. They allow us to continue our important work with communities to improve the roads and bridges that we all rely on. Almost 90% of the lane miles in Wisconsin are owned and operated by local units of government. And this budget provides significant increase in support to local communities statewide. It increases general transportation aid for local governments by 8% over the biennium. It increases the local road improvement program by 8% over the biennium, which will allow local governments to continue improving seriously deteriorating highways, toll roads, city and village streets. There's $45 million for local bridge programing that will ensure Wisconsin's bridges remain safe and reliable, as well as 12 and a half million dollars that will allow us to work with our local partners to be able to assess the agriculture smaller bridges that are so important to our rural communities. There's a $115 Million for the brand new Agriculture road improvement program that will keep the connection between farm fields and markets strong and our rural areas vital. More than an 8% increase in our highway system, maintenance and operations that will allow us to modernize pavement marking which will greatly improve safety and connecting highways were increased by 25% under this budget. As I mentioned before, with 90% of the lane miles being taken care of at the local level, all of these state aid to our local governments are critically important. But our local governments also on their end fund a majority of the infrastructure. And much like what I talked about with transportation, they went for decades without any increases in shared revenue, which strapped their ability to be able to to invest in our infrastructure when they also had to compete that against juvenile justice and courts and human service and recycling and all of those things. So this historic investment in shared revenue is going to build upon the increased gains that we're getting them at the state level so that local governments can can put their resources that they're getting into our infrastructure as well.

[00:27:09] **Unidentified** So we've all.

[00:27:17] **Speaker 4** All of these things combined are going to mean that the people of Wisconsin are going to see an improved infrastructure that will meet our 21st century workforce needs. And with that, it is my honor to be able to introduce the Department of Transportation in the Department of Agriculture Secretary Brady McMaster. Thank you. Secretary Thompson. Well, you grabbed it with purpose. There we go. All those jokes notwithstanding, it is really fitting that I am speaking after Secretary Thompson, because there are many things that Governor Evers has prioritized as investments since he first took office. And agriculture and transportation are intricately linked. And he's consistently made those kinds of investments. And the the emphasis that Secretary Thompson was placing on local roads is key here, because in Wisconsin, a lot of commerce starts on a local road. And in Wisconsin, a lot of that commerce starts with a farmer or processor. And we're grateful for that. And just to paint a bigger picture, agriculture in Wisconsin is almost $105 billion industry. It's a major economic engine. It's also an industry that's part of Wisconsin's past, present and future. It's an industry that employs a lot of Wisconsinites. One in nine people working in a job in the state of Wisconsin right now is working at a job related to every culture to this day. And the key here is that it takes investment to fortify that foundation. And as I say, Governor Harris has consistently prioritized investments in Wisconsin agriculture. That's why I'm pleased to join Governor Davis today as he signs this budget. It provides strong and needed investments for the industry, such as additional dairy processor grants, continuing nitrogen optimization funding and increasing meat processing grants just to name a few. The right. Being a partner with the industry to help them make these investments in their industry and their business that generates revenue for the local economy. He's also continued investments in several items that he's prioritized since he first took office. Ongoing funding for programs to increase exports of Wisconsin agricultural products around the world. Funds to support the popular and effective producer led security appraisal and watershed groups. And county conservation staff. The boots on the ground that work with farmers daily to protect their land and water. Because their land and water is Wisconsin's land and water. There. She heard it from many farmers. The comment that is pretty consistent is we take care of the land and water because the land and water takes care of us. Finally, in a year that the governor has declared the Year of Mental Health, he's once again provided funding to support their camps. Farm Center and his Farmer Wellness Program, a program that was established to provide a 24 seven helpline and other programs to help farmers address mental wellness. Burmese thought a 9 to 5 job. Farmers should have access to that kind of programing. Investments in our agricultural foundation are an investment in Wisconsin's economy. Thank you, Governor Evers, for your leadership on investments, education and resources for the agriculture industry.

[00:31:34] **Unidentified** And they're going.

[00:31:36] **Speaker 2** To have these young people helping to distribute pills.

[00:31:40] **Speaker 1** And I don't know if that's all right.

[00:31:45] **Speaker 2** They do. You know. Our friends. Good one and everybody's name, and.

[00:32:48] **Speaker 1** You're going to help.

[00:32:50] **Speaker 2** Because you can.

[00:32:53] **Speaker 1** Make up your how to pass Barcelona. You know, all three of. You're. You of being a presenter. What is happening for all evil in America from. I think.

[00:33:35] **Speaker 2** So.

[00:33:36] **Speaker 1** Yeah, actually. Somewhere over there. I needed to go. So they're going to keep. I do. Well, they were really, really good. I mean. And your economic. Yeah. Ha ha.

[00:34:52] **Speaker 2** All right. Well. Now. Time for a few questions.

[00:34:58] **Speaker 1** Do you think Barack Obama is going to do that?

[00:35:04] **Speaker 2** I'm sorry, I say that.

[00:35:06] **Speaker 1** Makes the topic of different day.

[00:35:13] **Speaker 2** We have four for two of the two highest. We remove them only to have them be where they were before. So everybody will receive some tax relief. But 175 million, if I'm not mistaken, when we hold gas. Any other questions?

[00:35:40] **Speaker 1** I'm going to use the new system, the 188, because these things, how are you able.

[00:35:44] **Speaker 2** To.

[00:35:45] **Speaker 1** Say that.

[00:35:46] **Speaker 2** You will be at home? And the system can use those positions for any reason. They can use it for the diversity work, but then they retain those 188 positions.

[00:36:05] **Speaker 1** As far as the highest tax bracket that's staying at the current levels that we've seen.

[00:36:10] **Speaker 2** Yes. So they think they will get tax relief also, but not nearly as much as they would have otherwise.

[00:36:17] **Speaker 1** What do you say to Republicans who say in your own way, you've got this flat tax of 4.95? You know, we can't compete with some of the neighbors to consumers. That is much higher. And what do you say about making the state more attractive by lowering the higher highest tax bracket?

[00:36:30] **Speaker 2** Well, I know the other states that have that have trouble finding people, too. So, no, I, I it's my belief that the middle class in the state of Wisconsin is where we should be supporting those costs in the most efficient way possible.

[00:36:50] **Speaker 5** In your view, to preserve the poor character?

[00:36:54] **Speaker 2** Yes. Yes.

[00:36:57] **Speaker 1** Would you would you consider this a compromise between Republicans and you just love it?

[00:37:03] **Speaker 2** There's a lot of things I didn't like about it. And I I'm sure there are some things that I vetoed that Republicans don't like. So, yes, I guess that's a compromise. But the bottom line is and I'll just use this as an example for anybody to think that child care is on is teetering on its head on a very, very edge of edge of a cliff. Thank you for that. They are. And if we want to have enough people to do the job, we can take half of them out of the workforce of either man or women. And so we have to do something about that. And so there's all sorts of opportunities where we left enough money in the budget for people from the Republicans and the Democrats and the legislature together to come up with some solutions. And that's what we expect. Governor, is.

[00:38:01] **Speaker 5** That going to keep your child care program going? Because I spoke to a Brookfield Childcare Center and they were talking about how they were able to add a lot of jobs through continuing education. Right. So it's 15 million. Is that enough?

[00:38:14] **Speaker 2** Well, no, absolutely not. I mean, that's that's a pittance. Our our proposal in this budget, I think it was $300 million. So is $15 million a big, big number for a reading personally? Yeah, that's a big number. But for to make sure that we have an early childhood system that works for everybody and keeps people in the workforce that want to be in the workforce, that that $50 million will not do it. Not even close.

[00:38:44] **Speaker 1** Republicans are attacking the political ideology on that.

[00:38:51] **Speaker 2** Yeah, I don't yeah, I think that's the wrong interpretation. That's that's a talking point from the from the national level that people are taking on. And the fact of the matter is Cola company, Rockwell, you name it. Any company, any large company in the state of Wisconsin has D-I efforts so that they can get enough people to do the work for them. And suddenly we're going to say this is the voice of saying when you break.

[00:39:20] **Speaker 5** Down after your details, how much money do you retain that the governor that the Republicans would have to spend.

[00:39:26] **Speaker 2** About that? That is something that if you're looking for a bottom line, we don't have it yet because we don't know what the expenditures for this fiscal year is, but there will be money available for them to do the right thing, especially in child care.

[00:39:42] **Speaker 1** Governor, voters say they want bipartisan compromise in this process. Well, people on both sides doing.

[00:39:49] **Speaker 6** Very frustrated about the sacrifices they have to make their priorities.

[00:39:52] **Speaker 1** What would you say to voters about what true bipartisanship looks like.

[00:39:57] **Speaker 2** On death row? And it looks like it works. You're in the market, county and city, wonky folks standing behind me. This is a big deal for them. And if you think about Marquee County in the city of Milwaukee, what a important economic driver they are for the state of Wisconsin and our ability to come together and solve problems in that arena. It was huge. It was huge. What we what was accomplished in the area of affordable housing, it was huge. You know, you talk about the agricultural roads piece. I mean, it's something that frankly, people don't think about on a regular basis, what they should and mean when we want to get a product from a farm to a processor to our homes. It starts with not having roads. I have weight limits and you have to have three trucks to take and stuff rather than one. And so there is lots of wins here on this. And bipartisanship does work. I do believe that we will have adequate resources going forward from the legislature to consider other things like child care.

[00:41:09] **Speaker 5** My question for you is your position that come with additional funding for those positions, approximately $33.

[00:41:18] **Speaker 2** Kind of back to the role that they may run away from the $32 million that you joined Finance Committee and the AMA and and UW out to figure out how what that means for our workforce. So I do believe that UAW will come up with a plan to get that 32 to $32 million by the end of the day. I think that our University of Wisconsin system and our technical college system can survive well with no increase. Hell no. But we need to you know, it's there's compromises and there's there's compromises. But I am concerned about that. And as much as on care.

[00:42:00] **Speaker 5** Things, I think. You don't necessarily have to be on the right path. You are above your.

[00:42:18] **Speaker 1** Background early in life, you know.

[00:42:30] **Unidentified** I feel like.