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[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** You might use. Use this.

[00:00:03] **Speaker 2** This segment. Yeah. This'll air in here and now. Tomorrow night. Okay. So we are statewide. We are on seventh at 730 on Friday evenings and then 11 a.m. Sunday mornings with kind of all the Sunday morning news programs.

[00:00:22] **Speaker 1** Yep. Yeah, exactly. Or online.

[00:00:26] **Speaker 2** Have you?

[00:00:27] **Speaker 1** Which is how I usually end up watching.

[00:00:29] **Speaker 2** Yeah. And I think I'll send you a link for sure.

[00:00:31] **Speaker 1** Okay.

[00:00:31] **Speaker 2** Have you spoken with Frederica before? We were down here and now?

[00:00:35] **Speaker 1** Before I did. What was. What were we talking about that time? Was it Children's Caucus that time or. Or suicide prevention? It could have been years ago.

[00:00:46] **Speaker 2** Yeah.

[00:00:47] **Speaker 1** Yes. In the studio. Yeah. Yeah, I went in that time.

[00:00:49] **Speaker 2** We've been around for a while. Yeah. So I'm actually the program's producer now. I took over for Andy Moore, who you might have corresponded with in the past. Okay. But sometimes I get to go out in the field and talk to people, too, so.

[00:01:05] **Speaker 1** Yeah. So do you get to be on the on the show doing this, or does Frederica dub herself in.

[00:01:12] **Speaker 2** Oh, no. So I'll be okay in the in the segment. Okay. And some usually she's the one out in the field. We just have a lot. She's also the executive producer of our entire news unit. So she's got a lot on her plate. So, yeah, we just decided.

[00:01:34] **Speaker 1** Well, I appreciate that. You know, y'all came over here to. To do this. Yeah, I can come down tomorrow.

[00:01:42] **Speaker 2** Yeah. So you have listening sessions?

[00:01:44] **Speaker 1** Yeah, I'm doing my personal district listening sessions tomorrow, next week, Monday, and then on April 10th. Okay, So I've got, I think eight of them lined up to do around the district. Okay.

[00:01:56] **Speaker 2** So you go to different spots and they're they're just kind of an open call, like.

[00:02:04] **Speaker 1** Exactly. Exactly. So we just publicize the locations and the time. And usually I do have I've been doing them springtime forever. And so this time of year I do a little. Yeah. How does the budget work?

[00:02:17] **Speaker 2** Well, yeah.

[00:02:18] **Speaker 1** And then. All right, when you want to tell me about what's happening in state government, whether it's legislation, whether it's your interest in the budget, you know, that, that kind of thing. So I it's just an open forum for for folks. Okay. So I'm mostly in libraries, a few, a few municipal.

[00:02:42] **Speaker 2** Buildings.

[00:02:43] **Speaker 1** Yeah. But I think libraries are a little less or less intimidating to people.

[00:02:48] **Speaker 2** Yeah.

[00:02:49] **Speaker 1** Than, you know, going into city Hall some place.

[00:02:52] **Speaker 2** You know? Yeah. Yeah, absolutely.

[00:02:54] **Speaker 1** So anyway, so that's the way I normally do it. I've tried coffee shops, but, you know, if you get somebody who isn't, you know, who wants to make a point, it can be disruptive to the people that just want to be at the. Yeah. Yeah. So I've tried away from that over the last couple years.

[00:03:14] **Speaker 2** Yeah. So and libraries sometimes have like.

[00:03:16] **Speaker 3** Side rooms or.

[00:03:18] **Speaker 1** Oh, that's what. Yeah. They always have some kind of meeting rooms or something. So it's, it's convenient for people to come in and less, like I said, less, um, most books were less intimidating.

[00:03:33] **Speaker 2** Yeah. Have you seen any change in like, the type of people that you see at those sessions, like age or interest, like topic areas, or do you see a lot of the same people year to year?

[00:03:47] **Speaker 1** We get a lot of people at all of them that come to talk about marijuana. That seems to be the recurring, really? Yeah, the recurring commentary. There's always somebody that well said, you know, I talk about mainly medical marijuana.

[00:04:04] **Speaker 2** Are you supportive of medical marijuana?

[00:04:06] **Speaker 1** If if it could be done right, okay. Yeah, it would be done, you know, correctly. But there's there's always a lot of schools advocates for schools because I'll go visit my school boards and school superintendents. So they'll be advocates for schools that maybe have something, you know, particular that they that they want to talk about. But those are probably the two things this this time, I expect a lot of municipal officials to come in and talk about their concepts of what we should do with shared revenue.

[00:04:46] **Speaker 2** So, yeah, well, this is. Are you ready?

[00:04:49] **Speaker 3** Yep.

[00:04:50] **Speaker 1** Okay, super.

[00:04:52] **Speaker 2** Any question before we get started?

[00:04:54] **Speaker 1** No, I don't think so. Okay. All right.

[00:04:56] **Speaker 2** Well, Senator Paul, thank you so much for doing this.

[00:04:59] **Speaker 1** Very good having you. Is you.

[00:05:00] **Speaker 2** I first want to ask why is it necessary to extend Medicaid benefits to postpartum mothers up to a year after giving birth?

[00:05:09] **Speaker 1** Absolutely. So what we've heard from from the advocates for that population of folks is that the continuity of care is something that we're really concerned with. Many times through pregnancy, there are health conditions that individuals may see are exacerbated during their pregnancy. And so we want to continue to have those folks monitored. And those those changes don't necessarily go away after 60 days, which is what current state law is. Also, there are some things that can come up a little bit later that are never that are never usually in the first 60 days, such as depression issues, which many times are aren't popping up until either 3 to 6 months later. The other thing we want to make sure is this youngster is getting off to a good start because they're being covered by that first year. So we don't want new mothers to have the stress of having to figure out how to continue their care if they are no longer covered. And so it just causes additional stress, you know, for that care. And we want to have new moms in their first year to be the best possible parents and be able to focus on that, on that little person.

[00:06:41] **Speaker 2** And what kind of benefits will this give both pregnant and postpartum mothers and kids?

[00:06:48] **Speaker 1** Well, it will make any changes for pregnant women or the first 60 days, because in Wisconsin, we do have a pretty rich benefit with coverage of 306% of the federal poverty limit. You go past the 60 days, then would fall back to what everybody else is at 100%. So we have this more generous means of taking care of our postpartum moms. So that would be the biggest difference, so that they would be able to continue that with the health care providers and the programs that they had set up during their pregnancy. And the first couple of months of most of the next couple of months postpartum.

[00:07:35] **Speaker 2** Wisconsin Republicans generally have not been in favor of any Medicaid expansion, talking about growing entitlement programs. Does this have broad Republican support in the Senate and Assembly?

[00:07:48] **Speaker 1** It does have broad Republican support and it has broad support. Overall, we have 66 co-sponsors to our legislation this year. I think this has been a bit of a learning curve for some of our members, you know, to understand what that relationship is and how this can strengthen families. It's something that I've been working on for most of the years that I've been in the legislature. Strengthening families, strengthening that bond, understanding that the the beginning years of a child's development are so important. Moving forward, we have a very broad coalition of sponsors from not only the legislature, from sponsorship around Wisconsin. When we were promoting this last year, the March of Dimes was our our biggest cheerleader for this and and did a lot of work on the ground of trying to talk to legislators. But this year, we have 33 groups that have registered in support from the March of Dimes to heart association to individual hospitals, the hospital association providers, insurance providers. It's just a very wide group of folks that have really come to understand the importance of the the long term care of of moms in the United States and Wisconsin are not doing a great job when it comes to maternal health. There is just a new see the CDC report that came out that the United States is even falling further behind when it comes to developed countries and Wisconsin is in the same condition. So I think people are starting to realize that it's it's time to provide this this help.

[00:09:46] **Speaker 2** And I didn't intend to ask you about that CDC report from came out recently, which showed that in 2021, the United States saw the worst maternal mortality rates in the country's history. So without the ability to seek abortions for the health of the mother in Wisconsin, is this legislation enough to take on these significant mortality rates?

[00:10:14] **Speaker 1** Well, we're talking about mortality rates for for new moms, for people who have gone through pregnancy. And that's that's our focus. So for these babies that are coming along, how do we keep their families strong? How do we keep mom in the best health means as possible moving forward and to avoid some of those those issues that may have been exacerbated by the pregnancy, hypertension, cardiac issues, all of those kinds of things. It was interesting when you look at the statistics and I have no factual understanding of this, but the statistics say it is this older moms that were having a higher rate of maternal mortality and morbidity. And I think there is a change in families in the United States and Wisconsin that, yes, we have we have women nowadays that are interested in starting their families a little bit later in life than maybe we had before. And of course, those are folks that have more experience in life and maybe have had a little bit more health concerns along the way. So I think we need all we can do to support those folks.

[00:11:42] **Speaker 2** What do you say to your Republican colleagues who aren't on board with this bill yet?

[00:11:48] **Speaker 1** Well, I think the number one thing I try to point out is that, you know, we are pro-life. We do see that we want to support new families in encouraged folks that want to build their families. And how do we how do we do that in a in a productive way, you know, be able to help those folks that are a little bit lower in the economic strata to provide them with some help that they can grow their families, you know, grow their financial support. You know, moving forward. So this is a this is a good thing overall for Wisconsin, for families. I just think it's the right thing to do.

[00:12:35] **Speaker 2** Has Governor Evers indicated any support or opposition?

[00:12:40] **Speaker 1** The governor has included this in his in his budget. So I would certainly think that this is something that that the governor would support. Last year in the budget, we did extend this coverage to 90 days. Our Department of Health Services did their job and sent that waiver application to CMS in Washington, D.C. But unfortunately, we haven't gotten the green light from them at this point. I think this would be a much easier application to have them approved and put into effect sooner than later.

[00:13:21] **Speaker 2** And that leads to my my next question, because that waiver has not been approved yet. How long would this program take to be approved by the Department of Health and Human Services?

[00:13:34] **Speaker 1** I think our State Department of Department of Health Services would would be very quick to move forward on this. Unknown what our friends in Washington, D.C. would do with the application, though.

[00:13:51] **Speaker 2** Senator Baldwin, thank you very much.

[00:13:53] **Speaker 1** Thank you for your time. Appreciate it.

[00:13:59] **Speaker 3** Right.

[00:14:01] **Speaker 1** Okay, We're missing the.

[00:14:03] **Speaker 3** The feds have done something different now for 12 months, so it's not a waiver process. It's. I can't remember the term. There is a different process. For 12 months, you'll see a lot of states have expanded settlements and they've gotten their approval. Way before, we couldn't answer it on the 90 day. Interesting that so completely different process for waiver versus just the amended plan.

[00:14:26] **Speaker 2** I think interesting.

[00:14:27] **Speaker 3** You just amend their state plan and that would get a check off, whereas you would apply for later.

[00:14:32] **Speaker 2** Is it partially because it's two different agencies, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid versus the Federal Department of Health and Human Services saying.

[00:14:44] **Speaker 3** That they don't want us to do less than 12 months?

[00:14:47] **Speaker 1** Right. Right. Oh, yeah. Yeah. They're very much on board of doing 12 months.

[00:14:51] **Speaker 3** Yes. So I see our waiver has been approved and Texas waiver has been approved. I think Texas tried to do six months, but they had a whole bunch of strings attached with that implication that we just had. Certainly isn't our Tuesday 7 p.m. either about.

[00:15:09] **Speaker 1** Time. But I'd also say that a lot of states that have already have a 12 month waiver don't have as rich a program as we do. So Illinois has had a 12 month for a 12 month postpartum coverage for some time, but they're at 200% the federal poverty limit where we're at 306. So we do have a richer program. We would cover more new moms than some of the programs that are already out there. So, you know, there are some differences. That's why I think if we can get this done, you know, just continue the program that we have, but do it for 12 months and provide that continuity.

[00:15:49] **Speaker 2** Are you worried at all about the the people that are going to fall off the Medicare auto renew program that went into place during the pandemic and it's going to kind of expire in May and June?

[00:16:04] **Speaker 1** Right. And and I've had several people come through the office talk about budget issues, and they're bringing that up quite a bit because they see that if we don't continue some of these programs in the next budget year, regardless of continuing the next budget, they're going to have almost a two month gap between those that federal emergency orders dropping off and what we may or may not do in the next budget. So it's definitely a concern for folks.

[00:16:36] **Speaker 2** Very interesting. Okay. Thank you so much.

[00:16:39] **Speaker 1** All right. Thank you for your time.

[00:16:41] **Speaker 2** Very good information.

[00:16:42] **Speaker 1** Great.

[00:16:45] **Speaker 2** Sorry. We took a little bit more of your time.

[00:16:48] **Speaker 1** Oh, no, this is just. This is something I like talking about so good. I have no problem at all. I'll spend some time going over this stuff when I get. All right. Thank you very much. You used to come to the capital, All right?

[00:17:02] **Speaker 3** Very much.

[00:17:03] **Speaker 1** Have a great day. Thanks for the setup. Oh, for coming over.

[00:17:06] **Speaker 3** Of course. You think that these.

[00:17:08] **Speaker 1** Are your best. All right. I. Oh.