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[00:00:31] **Speaker 1** It's been two months since Donald Trump signed into law his, quote, big, beautiful bill. And while the cuts to Medicaid included in the bill don't take effect until 2027, Democrats are already sounding the alarm on the overall impact. Joining us now is U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin. And thanks for joining us. Thanks for having me. So you've been touring the state to talk with providers and patients about these cuts. What are you hearing?

[00:00:54] **Speaker 2** Well, I've been visiting critical access hospitals in rural areas of the state. Their margins were thin to begin with before the passage of this. Now they're looking at heartbreaking decisions about perhaps closing off certain departments because they are not profitable and to help them stay afloat. Bye. Some we know in Wisconsin will be looking at shutting their doors. Particularly troublesome is the decision some hospitals have made to stop having obstetrics delivery, meaning that there are places in Wisconsin where women have to travel literally hours to get the services they need. And it's harming the health and well-being of Wisconsin, and it's not just one small example. You know, there were big nutrition cuts in the bill, and so visiting food pantries and those who are focused on food security, and recognizing the impact that those cuts are gonna have. And we also deal with an issue of the premium tax credits for Affordable Care Act, health coverage. Those will end at the end of this year, And we're going to see those impacts. Almost immediately, all of us are gonna pay more. And what's so ironic, you know, this is Trump's signature legislation. He came into office vowing to lower costs on everything, right, groceries, but healthcare, et cetera. This bill that has just passed, which is predominantly tax legislation benefiting large corporations and the very richest. It's going to bring costs up for everyone, and especially health care costs.

[00:02:53] **Speaker 1** So the administration of Governor Tony Evers put out a study estimating the legislation would cost Wisconsin $140 million a year, potentially force 270,000 Wisconsinites off their insurance. How does that happen? When Republicans claim the bill only creates work requirements from Medicaid, it doesn't push anybody off.

[00:03:11] **Speaker 2** Well, first of all, the red tape that has been added to already existing complex application processes will actually end up pushing people who are fully eligible for Medicaid or Badger as we know it here in Wisconsin, off the program. These are designed to add layers of complexity to make it really difficult for somebody who's perhaps juggling two, three jobs to maintain their eligibility. And it's disappointing, but we know it's going to have those impacts. You can't cut a trillion dollars out of Medicaid over 10 years without kicking people off who are eligible. And that's what we're gonna see happening. But again, the Affordable Care Act tax credits expire at the end of this year. We're gonna a lot of Wisconsinites losing access to private insurance through the healthcare marketplace much sooner than the impacts of the Medicaid cuts.

[00:04:20] **Speaker 1** Now, yesterday we saw the Health and Human Services Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr. Testify before a Senate committee about his decision to fire the CDC director, among other things that he's done. There's a growing list of Democrats and organizations calling for him to be fired or resigned. Are you on that list?

[00:04:36] **Speaker 2** I am among them. I call on him to resign." Look, between his massive layoffs, mass firings, and his refusal to administer grants that he's required to by law, and the cutting off of biomedical research, and his choice to put his own personal politics on vaccines above science. Is literally endangering the health of Wisconsinites, who I represent. And I would not only call on him to resign, but I call on my Republican counterparts, many of whom got assurances directly from RFK Junior that he would not put his own conspiracy theories ahead of rock solid science as he's doing. And they feel betrayed, I think, by RFK Jr. And I hope they'll stand up with me calling on him to resign.

[00:05:36] **Speaker 1** Speaking of vaccines, we saw Florida announce they're moving to eliminate vaccine requirements. We have a measles outbreak in Oconto County in Wisconsin. How do you draw the line between vaccine mandates or requirements and personal healthcare choices that some people make of whether or not to vaccinate themselves or their children?

[00:05:53] **Speaker 2** Well, first of all, I feel that it would be incredibly unwise to start having a patchwork quilt of state regulations on these. We need to follow the science. And there is rock-solid science that, like the measles vaccine, work. And they prevent outbreaks, like we've seen not only in Wisconsin, but in Texas, where two children have died unnecessarily. And so I think that these decisions do have to be made by parents in consultation with their doctors, but science needs to be in the lead here. And RFK Junior has spent his career prior to getting nominated as Health and Human Services Secretary, peddling in these conspiracy theories about vaccines. And so it's very dangerous to have him at the helm right now.

[00:06:51] **Speaker 1** Switching from healthcare, earlier this week, the president of the Milwaukee Police Union said he'd be okay with Donald Trump deploying National Guard troops to Milwaukee. Two Republicans running for governor of Wisconsin have joined that call. Would you support troops in Milwaukee?

[00:07:04] **Speaker 2** Look, what I support is safety and cracking down on crime. And I think that the National Guard are totally unsuited. They sign up for guard duty because of a different mission entirely. And we should be spending those resources helping cities like Milwaukee or other communities have the adequate policing staff that they need. But you know what, I really think the deployment of the National Guard, whether it be to Los Angeles or Washington D.C. Or wherever, Donald Trump plans to send them next, is a distraction. He doesn't want the headlines to be about the Epstein files. He doesn' want the headline to be the devastating cuts to Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act. He wants to change the subject, and that's what he's doing.

[00:07:56] **Speaker 1** Continuing with law enforcement, should local agencies be forced to cooperate with ICE as they continue Donald Trump's policy of mass deportations? Because we do have a patchwork quilt of which counties and communities cooperate and how they cooperate.

[00:08:11] **Speaker 2** Look, we always want law enforcement to be cooperating with one another. The mission is to be able to have safe communities. And I think in the United States, people agree with the idea that violent criminals who are not citizens should be deported. That said, we have seen Donald Trump go way beyond what he said he would do. And I think... As we see, you know, rounding up of folks who have been law-abiding individuals in our communities, maybe seeking asylum or refugee status, that's not what the public is asking for. And I think it should be, I think we need to hold this administration accountable to what they said they were going to do and not the overreach that we're seeing now.

[00:09:09] **Speaker 1** There are a lot of Democratic voters around the state that are frustrated with Democrats in Washington saying they haven't done enough to stand up to Donald Trump. What would you tell them? What is being done that maybe they aren't seeing, or is even more that could be done?

[00:09:22] **Speaker 2** Look, I think that we have seen in this president somebody who is willing to violate the Constitution, violate the law, and just to remind everyone of the basics of the Constitution. Article 1 gives Congress the power to make law, pass laws, and fund agencies. And it's the president's responsibility and his administration's responsibility to administer those laws. And to implement those budgets. He's defying that. And so where Congress and Democrats in Congress standing up is to pass legislation to restore the cuts that he is making. But you know, there's three components to this. There's the Congress and democrats in Congress fighting back. There's also the courts. And where the president is breaking the law and violating the constitution, we're bringing this up in court. And frankly, we're winning a lot of those cases. The justice system is working in many of these instances. And then lastly, it's us standing with our constituents and fighting back through preparing for elections in the ballot box, but also. To stand up as citizens and speak out against the overreaches and abuses.

[00:10:54] **Speaker 1** All right, Senator Tammy Baldwin, thanks for your time.

[00:10:56] **Speaker 2** Thank you.

[00:11:02] **Speaker 1** Thank you for your time. My pleasure. I really appreciate it. I didn't get a chance to throw it in here, but what are your plans as far as the Democratic primary for governor next year? You kind of staying back or do you expect at some point you might endorse?

[00:11:14] **Speaker 2** I do not particularly think I would endorse in the race. I have been in touch with all the prospective candidates. They've reached out as somebody who's had some experience running statewide and winning races. And I'm really pleased with the caliber of candidates we have. And I think it's going to be a healthy primary.

[00:11:43] **Speaker 1** So when you, sorry, when you first ran for Senate, the field kind of cleared for you. You were, everyone knew your name and your chances there. Do you think a robust primary is healthy or is there kind of a silent primary of like, who has the best chance? Let's not have them spend all their money in the primary.

[00:11:58] **Speaker 2** I think it will be a robust primary. I think all the candidates that I've spoken to want to be governor and are going to do everything they can to win in the primary. I think we're going to get to see a field of very talented people.

[00:12:14] **Speaker 1** All right, thank you again. I really appreciate it. We'll let you get on here next time. Not at all.

[00:12:20] **Speaker 2** The primary.