**Baldwin\_Press\_avail\_shutdown\_20251007.mp3**

[00:02:50] **Speaker 1** Recording in progress office a few notes of housekeeping before we get started the senator will kick us off with some brief remarks in a moment and then we'll hear from Kara. Kara is a mom and a non-profit child care director in Milwaukee. Not only does Kara get her health through the Affordable Care Act's open marketplace, but so do many of her employees. After they speak, we'll have time for a few on-topic questions. Please submit any questions you have to the Zoom chat Q&A function, and I will relay them to the Senator. For any questions we do not get to or off-topics questions, please follow up with me or our press team and we will work to get you responses. Please note that because we are doing this webinar style, you will not be able to record the meeting within the Zoom app. However, you are welcome to use a third-party platform to record. Otherwise, our office will send a recording via email afterwards to all participants. Now, I'll hand it over to Senator Baldwin to make some remarks.

[00:03:45] **Speaker 2** Thank you so much. Good morning, everybody. Thank you for joining us today. Last week, around the same time, I hosted a different virtual press conference with two Wisconsinites, Gigi, a small business owner in Stoughton, and Kate, a local artist in La Crosse. Both Gigi and Kate get their health insurance through the Affordable Care Act Marketplace. And right now they can do that because it is affordable to them. While they may live in different parts of the state and have different health needs uh and different daily lives, they both face the same reality and that is that their health care premiums are set to quadruple next year. And today I'm here alongside Cara, a mom and a non-profit child care director in Milwaukee. Not only is Kara grappling with the fact that her own health care costs will skyrocket if Republicans refuse to act, but the fear of what it might mean for her employees keeps her up at night. Unfortunately, Kara, Gigi, and Kate are certainly not alone in their fears. 24 million Americans who get their health care through the Affordable Care Act are waiting for that dreaded letter, letting them know that their premium costs will skyrocket. For 22 million who receive the enhanced premium tax credits, their premiums will likely double. An estimated 4 million Americans are going to get that letter and realize that they simply cannot afford healthcare at all anymore. Small business owners might see staff flee for big corporations that can afford a big group insurance policy. Farmers who are already facing incredible headwinds will be dealt another blow. The pain that not extending these tax credits will cause is very clear. And that's why nearly 80% of Americans, and I'm talking majorities of Republicans, Democrats and independents. Support extending these tax breaks. However, Republicans refuse to see what is right in front of them, which leads us to today, the seventh day of a government shutdown. My Republican colleagues have had the chance, they've had chance after chance to lower costs for families and join Democrats in voting to stop these premium tax breaks from being stripped away. And they have shot it down every time. Earlier this year, they drafted a massive tax bill. And instead of including a tax break for hardworking Americans to be able to afford their healthcare, they chose tax cuts for massive corporations and billionaires. Working Americans do not want handouts. They just want a system that isn't rigged for and by those at the very top. They want healthcare they can afford when they need it. So that brings us to today, day seven of the Republican's federal government shutdown. And let me be crystal clear, we need to reopen the government and address the healthcare crisis that families are staring down. This shutdown is about one thing and one thing only, the cost of health care. So I'm here in Washington DC working hard to end this chaos. I've been here for the past week working to reopen the government and lower costs for families, including voting five times for a bill that would reopen the Government and reverse the Republicans' harmful cuts to health care The House Republicans have been basically on vacation for the last 19 days. And they have no plan to come back to Washington until potentially next week. They've just abandoned their responsibilities. The people I work for. Have been crystal clear about what they expect of Congress. Work to lower costs and give them the opportunity for their hard work to let them save and get ahead. We need to lower the cost of healthcare, not take it away from millions of families. I've always said I'll work with anyone to do what's right for Wisconsinites. And that remains true today. I'm here. I'm calling on my Republican colleagues to work with me. So we reopen the government and deliver for families across this country. And now I will hand it over to Kara to share her story.

[00:08:55] **Speaker 3** Thank you, Senator.

[00:08:57] **Speaker 4** And for that exactly on target introduction of what's happening. My story is very common to so many people who are living in America right now. I am a single mom, I do run a small business and the business that I happen to run is childcare. Which means that we support each and every single one of you, at your staffers, we show up every day just as the core foundation. And right now, the rising cost of health care or the potential rising cost health care puts us in a position that is almost unthinkable. And I'm home today with my 17 year old daughter, who is struggling with some, she's having some health issues. And I think about the people who can't work from home. And I about what it would mean if these premiums go up, what we can't provide for her and the continued suffering. Of her and of my productivity and of our ability to serve the community every day. And just last week, Main Street Alliance and Fair Share were kind enough to invite me to DC and it was great to get out where you are and to be a part of the community that is the fight with the with the Democrats who are showing up and I actually hate partisan issues. It's not my preferred method of communication. But the reality is, we're being lied to every day by the Republicans. And Mike Johnson and who he hands off his gavel to are failing us every day with this narrative that is about anything other than padding the bank accounts of their sponsors. And I don't even know how deep it goes, but I do know that when I go to work and I hear people say to me, you know, I don t know how much longer I can hang in there, If this goes up, you know, $300 a month, I can't afford my rent. I can't afford my food, the type of food that they want to feed their children. I can afford to show up the way that I want to as a parent. So I may no longer be able to work as an early childhood educator. And I hear it from the child care providers across Wisconsin, which I'm sure you do, too, Senator, like, you know, we you cannot have a healthy community without healthy child care. And... My goal today is to just promote that access to equitable health care. And also, to add that as a child care provider, I can't divorce myself from the fact that we are being left behind. And Johnson, Representative Johnson, is not showing up with integrity. And it's exhausting. It's very concerning. And It's not just the cost of. Healthcare, it's the cost of peace of mind. It's the costs of our ability. All we do is make more money for America. That's what we do in our industries. And good business invest in their employees. And essentially that's what all community members are. And we just wanna know that when our children are sick, when we are sick we won't be abandoned. By the Republicans or by anyone in government and communities. So, I really appreciate the ability to share my voice. We're not asking for charity. We are just asking for equity. And to label it as that it's about Democrats wanting illegal aliens to have medical insurance, they have never shown one document to me that I can show to anybody to back that. End. I put their money where their mouth is, show us the documentation, that that's what any of you, our representatives, are asking for. It isn't true. It is lies. It's detrimental. It's abusive. It's manipulative. And it's extremely concerning to the fabric of the community that we've built. So thank you for having me. My hope is that we can just rely on the already pretty high price that I pay for private health care. But going higher is extremely detrimental to myself, my children and my community.

[00:13:55] **Speaker 1** Thank you, Kara, so much for being here and sharing that with us today. Just a reminder to folks on the call that questions should be submitted to the chat Q&A function. We'll get to as many on topic questions as we can with Senator Baldwin and Kara. If you have any follow up questions, please direct them to our office via email afterwards. We'll take a brief pause here for a moment. Great, and we'll start with this one. Senator, the shutdown is about to enter its second week. Is Congress any closer to a deal? What's the latest that you're hearing?

[00:14:35] **Speaker 2** Well, first, let me be very clear. I do not want our government to be shut down. And I voted again last night for the fifth time to keep our government open and keep health care costs down for Wisconsin families. And my Republican colleagues refused to do this. Republicans are on a path to make health care insurance premiums for 22 million people skyrocket. And force four million Americans off their health care insurance entirely because they simply won't be able to pay the premiums. And in some states we are seeing monthly premium payments for families quadruple. Can you imagine? And I'm hearing Wisconsinites are preparing for exactly the same thing. If that's not a crisis, I don't know what is. So for me and the people I work for, I can't just let this happen and go along to get along. We have got to get a bipartisan agreement. The only way out of this mess is when Democrats and Republicans start working together. And I've been at the table. And I will stay right here until we reopen the government and stop health care costs from going through the roof. But my Republican colleagues are really nowhere to be found right now. And that's extremely frustrating.

[00:16:11] **Speaker 1** Thanks, Senator. The next question we have is for Kara. You said you hate partisan issues, but what would your message to Republicans in Wisconsin be? And I think I just need you to unmute.

[00:16:26] **Speaker 4** That's a great question. I think that when we say that we're for the people of the people and by the people, and then we show up with policies that actively hurt us, it betrays the initial narrative. And so across Wisconsin, which, look, the state has some deeply concerning Republican representatives. And I give Senator Baldwin and a nonpartisan issue, anyone who's willing to stand up and say, we support Wisconsin. I am not from here. This is my chosen adopted state. I think this is an amazing state. As we look across the state, people here, they're just hard workers and they just want to be protected by the people that they're committed to. So, as the Republican representatives, and I do, I do dislike that it's partisan. I look back at my childhood in the 80s and 90s of when it was Reagan and Bush and then Clinton, and it was so, it was the good old days. It was so much more civil. And it was really about actual products that helped people. What's being debated right now, this like illegal aliens in ER rooms, that was Reagan, you know? And we look back at that, and it was just people who wouldn't abandon us. And what I feel across this continent is that the Republicans just are in it for business, and they have abandoned us. And Wisconsin is a gorgeous state with lots of farmers, lots of... Hard, hard-working people who love to work hard. I mean, that's one of the things I love about this state, that we love to do work hard, and we can't do that. If they're going to let us down, if they're gonna put their interest into money over people, then they betray us and we become less good.

[00:18:37] **Speaker 1** Thank you, Kara. And we'll have time for one more question, so we'll end on this one. Senator Baldwin, do the Democrats have any plans if the shutdown does not force the hand of Republicans?

[00:18:56] **Speaker 2** Look, it's such a clear path. We need to negotiate the only path forward in the Senate is a bipartisan solution. And we're beginning to see, let's say, cracks in the dam right now. Yesterday, the president said he was willing to negotiate. Now, they walked that back, but that was a glimmer. And we just have to make sure that my Republican colleagues hear from the voters of their states and... We must address the crisis in healthcare that Trump has created with the Republicans' help earlier this year with that big ugly bill. Which by the way, I just want to reiterate this, that was a tax measure, predominantly. And while they were handing out big tax benefits to big corporations and billionaires, The very least they could have done is extend this tax break for working families that helps them afford their healthcare. We're demanding they do that now.

[00:20:24] **Speaker 1** Great. Thank you, Senator. And that's all we'll have time for today. Thank you again to Kara for taking the time to join us. I'll be sending around a recording of this meeting to all participants in the next 30 minutes or so. Please feel free to reach out to me with any follow-up questions. Again, thank you so much, everyone.