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[00:00:21] **Speaker 1** In Washington, congressional lawmakers are wrangling over passing important parts of President Donald Trump's so-called Big Beautiful Bill, with three committees passing legislation to cut taxes, Medicaid, and food aid. In Wisconsin, more than one million people are covered by Medicaid, the healthcare program for lower income families and individuals. The Republican provisions would also cut food aid, known here as Food Share. These spending cuts combine with legislation extending Donald Trump's 2017 tax cuts. A Wisconsin member of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee had her sleeves rolled up this week trying to bat back these provisions. Milwaukee Democratic Congresswoman Gwen Moore joins us from Washington. And Congresswoman, thank you very much for being here.

[00:01:13] **Speaker 2** Always good to be with you, Frederico.

[00:01:15] **Speaker 1** So you call this a quote, big bonanza for billionaires. How so?

[00:01:23] **Speaker 2** Well, you know, our jurisdiction, Ways and Means Committee, our instructions was to increase the deficit by $4.5 trillion in order to pass these tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. You know, there was one amendment in particular that I had to look at the 199A deductions. And I'll just cut to the quick. This is this is a program that supposedly is one of the most expensive provisions in the bill costing maybe 800 upwards of 800 billion dollars and it's supposed to help quote-unquote small businesses but you take dick Dick Eline, for example, he uses this pass-through method to claim $115 million in benefits. And 84 percent of these so-called small businesses that receive this benefit have absolutely no employees. And so it doesn't even help. We're giving benefits. $800 billion worth of benefits and 84% of them have absolutely no employees at all. And so here's the benefit, say you got a small business that makes $200,000 a year, They'd only get about $6,000 in cuts, whereas, again, someone like Dick Eli, no employees. Uh, perhaps gets $115 million so that most of the benefit goes to the 1% and that's why I called it a big bonanza for billionaires. Uh, just stunned that they called it a big beautiful bill considering how many people are harmed and left behind by the provisions of the bills in the three committees.

[00:03:24] **Speaker 1** Don't average taxpayers also benefit, though, from extending the 2017 cuts?

[00:03:30] **Speaker 2** Oh, that's one of their huge talking points, Frederica, is that if we don't pass this big, beautiful bill, everybody, including lower income taxpayers, are going to suffer a big gimmick that they temporarily raise some of the benefits for people in the lower quintiles. And, of course, just to get them through the 2026 election cycle, and then they go away, whereas they make the rest of the corporate benefits permanent. I mean, it is so nefarious, and it's really not funny.

[00:04:10] **Speaker 1** On the Medicaid provisions, we know it would require able-bodied adults to work, volunteer or be in school for 80 hours a month. Why is that onerous, and how could it reduce the number of people covered by Medicaid?

[00:04:27] **Speaker 2** What is able-bodied, Frederica? You know, I just lost my nephew last October, 33 years old, had had a heart transplant, wasn't on social security or SSI, and yet he was very, very disabled. But he was working to try to maintain Medicaid because of the expense of his anti-rejection medication. He died October 20th, but to look at him, He looked like something snatched off the cover of Sports Illustrated. There are so many people who are disabled or have medical problems that are not. Um that are not designated as disabled by the social security administration is very very hard to get an SSI or SSDI disability people apply and reapply and are rejected but you know the in the case of uh Medicaid this they have actually scored Throwing people off and say if you're a 54-year-old man who's done roofing all your life, it's very likely that by the time you're age 53. That you may not be really that able to climb up on those ladders and fix roofs anymore. Or you might find yourself some woman who's 50 years old, 52, starting to have diabetes or arthritis and you haven't been designated as disabled, but you know, you're not able to stand up in a restaurant for, you know an eight hour day and wait on tables or And you know, but you will be. Called an evil body simply because you're not, you know, designated by the Social Security Act. The other thing is that most people work when they can. Everybody likes to have money. They like the self-esteem. They like it. And when people can't work, it's for very good reasons. Sometimes, you it's not because they have overwhelming disabilities themselves, but they have children at home. They have elders at home that they're taking care of. I mean, we spent a half trillion dollars a year on uncompensated care. People who have their mothers living with them to keep them out of nursing homes, and they have to cut their hours in order to take care of them. Some people are taking care kids because their children are meeting work requirements and they can't afford childcare. And actually it is so nefarious that is so mean-spirited. To put these work requirements in place because all it does is throw otherwise eligible needy people off the ropes.

[00:07:18] **Speaker 1** So some Republicans don't like that the work requirement doesn't go into effect until 2029 and want steeper cuts. What else do the Medicaid provisions in this legislation do, including to the Affordable Care Act.

[00:07:35] **Speaker 2** Well, the Affordable, let me start there. One of the things that this does is, you know, they have characterized the, it's Obamacare, okay? And of course we remember, Frederica, that 60 times the Republicans have tried to undermine and eliminate the Affordable Care Act, so-called Obamacares, and then John McCain did the thumbs down. They, you now, they are undermining the Affordable care Act. And so those people who are working those people who are getting credits. Through the Affordable Care Act. They're not poor enough to qualify for Medicaid at 100% of the poverty level, but they don't have employer-sponsored insurance. These are people who are going to lose coverage because they will not be able to afford the expensive health care as rates go way up without the premiums, and they'll find themselves out of luck and off of care, you know, and with the Medicaid changes, even more onerous. We're thinking that there are probably about 14 million people at a minimum. That are going to lose benefits because of the changes that they've made to Medicaid. And these are onerous benefit cuts. They say, oh, we're not going to make cuts to individuals. But I'm telling you, Medicaid is part of a larger health care system. You know, hospitals, about a quarter of their income relies on Medicaid reimbursements. Nursing homes, probably 75, 77% of the cost of nursing homes comes from Medicaid. And there are things like people being able to stay in their homes and not go to nursing homes. This might be one of the first things on the chopping block. When states have to face cuts in Medicaid. You know, benefits like getting a ride to your medical appointments are things that are subject to being cut. States will have to make real choices in order to fill the gaps. And of course, this will hurt, not just individuals, but we find rural hospitals that might find themselves just being shut down, urban hospitals that will close their maternity wards. People might fight, and even people who have private health insurance will be affected. They might find themself having a heart attack, have good coverage, but have to drive 30 miles in order to get treatment and succumb to death. Because the patient mix will have been disrupted such that their hospitals that were closer to them will shut down. The Energy and Commerce Committee were given instructions to cut Medicaid and they cut it for over $700 billion and don't believe for a second that it won't hurt you.

[00:10:54] **Speaker 1** Another big item are cuts to food assistance. Will that affect people in Wisconsin?

[00:11:01] **Speaker 2** Oh my goodness, there are probably 18,000 veterans that are going to be harmed by cuts in SNAP. And because of the changes that they have made, you know, SNAP, current law, 100 percent of SNAP benefits and funding comes from the federal government, and the administrative costs come from the state. With these changes that the did in the Energy and Commerce Committee, they have in a zero tolerance for error. Zero tolerance. So that if people get even one dollar, one dollar in extra SNAP benefits, food stamp benefits, the state will be dinged. And if they find that they have over a 6% error rate, they will be responsible for up to 15% of the cost of SNAP. You know, in Wisconsin, you know, our governor has calculated that the state would find itself having to come up with $200 million just in Wisconsin to fill the gap. The other thing that's so onerous about SNAP is that they get 53-year-old folks, 54-year old folks, again, who will only be eligible for SNAP for three months every three years. Three months out of every three years that they'll be eligible for SNAP. And this is a way that they will quote unquote cut the benefits. They'll also cut it by putting an onerous bureaucratic tape, red tape in, requiring people to report numerous times a year and really calculating people's human error. With regard to following up with mail or appointments to slash their Medicaid benefits. So this budget really relies on budget gimmicks, people not being able to meet work requirements, people not be able to keep up with the paperwork. And this is how they've calculated their loss and benefits. It's really, really a very nefarious plan.

[00:13:15] **Speaker 1** And yet it's very likely to pass.

[00:13:20] **Speaker 2** Well, you know, yesterday, we had two members of the budget committee saying, in the budget committee's meeting, probably as we speak or in a few minutes of when we're having this conversation, Francesca, and you know they, Two people said they were hard nos. A third, we only needed one more person to say no. And that was a member who was away because his wife just gave her, they flew him back some kind of way. And he's there today. And I'm sure that between Trump and the Republican conference, they're putting intense pressure on these members to pass it out of the budget committee. We have never seen anything like this among our Republican colleagues who are being threatened. You know, with primaries, Elon Musk has said that he will finance primaries against any Republicans that defies Donald Trump. And we literally have Republicans behind closed doors. So many of them are saying that they don't want to see these cuts. They have been pressured, in particular, by their constituents, particularly on Medicaid. We have people in wheelchairs outside of the Energy and Commerce Committee, in wheel chairs, being arrested, putting, as John Lewis would say, the late great, putting their bodies on the line to stop these cuts, because they're in such dire need of them. And yet... We have an administration who's been able to intimidate them. And so, you know, our guess is, is that it'll probably pass out of the budget committee today, but it's not over yet. It's not over yet because people are still out there raising their voices. I'm encouraging them to continue to do it. Don't forget the John McCain thumbs down. We can always have someone who shows some spines, some guts. Between the House and the Senate to bring us back, pull us back from the brink.

[00:15:31] **Speaker 1** Congresswoman Gwen Moore, thanks very much.

[00:15:34] **Speaker 2** And thank you. Have a good day, Franjica.

[00:15:37] **Speaker 1** Thank you. That was... You're Francesca. It's, my name is Hard. It's Frederica.

[00:15:50] **Speaker 3** I mean, but I've known you for like, well, even when I caught myself immediately, Yeah, but you corrected it.

[00:15:58] **Speaker 1** Jessica. You correct.

[00:15:59] **Speaker 3** It's a nice day, you know?

[00:16:02] **Speaker 1** Francesca, it's nice. I could have gone with that. But no, that was really important, and thank you for all of your explanation, for our audience, about all of the parts of this and how it relates to people here in Wisconsin. Thank you.

[00:16:21] **Speaker 2** Be well.

[00:16:22] **Speaker 1** You too. You too, thank you.