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Budget Bill Squanders Opportunity to Invest in Our Future

The following is a statement by Ken Taylor, Kids Forward's Executive Director, regarding passage of the budget bill in both houses of the legislature:

Wisconsin residents deserve a budget that invests in our children, our families, and our communities, and that makes sure that the door to opportunity is open to all. For our state's economy to work for everyone, we need a budget that lays the groundwork for widely-shared prosperity. Instead, the legislature is giving us a "business as usual" budget that fails to remove – or even reinforces – obstacles to success for families of color and others.

Legislators squandered a golden opportunity to make the sorts of investments that would significantly improve K-12 and higher education, child care, tax equity and access to health care. The legislature rejected a wide variety of proposals that would assist families furthest from opportunity, including people in rural areas of Wisconsin and communities of color.

Kids Forward and other advocates do not see this week's votes as the end of budget debates. We will continue to fight for Wisconsin to increase much needed funding for public schools. We will continue to fight for changes to the tax code that help provide a level playing field for families and businesses, such as increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Homestead Credit. And we will continue to fight until Wisconsin joins the vast majority of states that have expanded Medicaid. Expanding Medicaid will make health insurance affordable for all minimum wage workers, will cover an additional 82,000 Wisconsinites, and will lower premiums in the private marketplace, all while saving Wisconsin taxpayers at least \$160 million per year.

Our children rightfully expect legislators to do the right thing for them, for their families, for their communities, and for their future. Wisconsin's kids deserve better.