



Senate Democrats

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Weekly Democratic Radio Address: Wisconsin Farmers Deserve Better

MADISON, WI – Senator Jeff Smith (D-Eau Claire) offered the Democratic weekly radio address this week after Republicans on the Joint Finance Committee refused to take up an agency request for critical funding for farmers and farm families in Wisconsin.

The audio file of this week's address can be found here:

<https://sen-dem.cms.legis.wisconsin.gov/media/1305/sen-smith-weekly-radio-address-wisconsin-farmers-deserve-better.mp3>

A written transcript of the address is below:

"Hi, I'm State Senator Jeff Smith with this week's radio address.

"This week, Republican Joint Finance Committee members rejected a request from the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection to fund mental health assistance for farm families.

"The funding would've allowed the agency's Farm Center to establish a hotline staffed by professionals to aid farmers facing a mental health crisis. The funding would've provided vouchers for farm families to cover the cost of counseling sessions and reduce the risk of suicide.

"Farm bankruptcies are growing. The suicide rate for farmers continues to rise. It's unacceptable for Republicans to turn their backs on our small dairy farmers and block funding for critical mental health services. Every decision our farmers make is a big decision. Especially during a time when margins are tight, credit access is drying up and climate change makes it harder to farm.

"Our farmers deserve better and they need help now. Politics can't get in the way of saving farmers' lives during this difficult time. Mental health funding is urgent for our rural communities. It's time to do what's right for Wisconsin farmers and their families."

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