Republican inaction on Joint Committee on Finance and rejection of Secretary-Designee Brad Pfaff a blow to farmers.

MADISON – While Wisconsin is in the midst of a dairy crisis, Republicans have, once again, put politics ahead of Wisconsin farmers, and rejected the nomination of an overwhelmingly qualified candidate to lead the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). For the first time in modern Wisconsin history, Republicans have rejected a Secretary, purely for political reasons.

"Due to Republican inaction, farmers across Wisconsin were left waiting as the Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) sat on funds to assist farmer mental health for months," said Senator Erpenbach. "Our Agriculture Secretary - whose job it is to defend and advocate for farmers- had the courage to stand up and fight for farmers and against suicide. Unfortunately, that courage wasn't replicated on the Senate floor today with no explanations of switched votes that cost our farmers the best qualified candidate for the job."

Agriculture communities are near and dear to Secretary-Designee Brad Pfaff, and that is what Wisconsin should expect from someone in that role. Until today, Republicans had come out in support of his leadership, experience, and vision for our farming communities. Every Republican on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Revenue, and Financial Institutions, had already voted in favor of Secretary-Designee Pfaff in February, including Senators Marklein, Petrowski, Testin, Jacque, and Bernier.

More importantly, organizations across the state have urged the legislature to support his confirmation, including the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, Wisconsin Corn Growers Association, and the Wisconsin Agri-Business Association, among others.

“When the United States Secretary of Agriculture comes to our state and tells our farmers to go big or go home, and the Republicans serving in our State Senate continually cause uncertainty for our agriculture communities, from leaving mental health unfunded to rejecting a highly qualified secretary because he stood up for farmers, we have to ask what Republicans stand for. After today, it is hard for anyone to say that Republicans stand for farmers.”