

November 3, 2019

Dear Wisconsin State Senators,

Let me start off by saying thank you for taking the time to read this letter and also for all you do for the great State of Wisconsin.

It is now corn drying season and as I sit in our little grain shack drying corn around the clock, I have time to get up to date on current events. The other day I came across an article in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel about the fact that Secretary Designee Brad Pfaff may not have the votes to be confirmed. In a nutshell, my heart sank! That article is the reason for this letter. I have known Mr. Pfaff for a number of years, but it wasn't until last February that I was able to find out what a truly genuine person he really is.

On behalf of the Trempealeau and Buffalo County Farm Bureau's, please allow us to tell you about the Brad Pfaff we know; the champion that farmers depend on and the leader that Wisconsin agriculture needs.

Last February was one of, if not, the snowiest months on record. As Wisconsinites, dealing with snow just comes naturally; but beyond the snow, ice began building up and high winds created snow drifts that put incredible stress on barns and sheds. In our area we had a devastatingly large number of barn and building collapses due to ice and heavy snow. The month of February for farmers in western Wisconsin consisted of plowing snow, helping neighbors clear snow and debris to get cattle out of collapsed barns and buildings, and even helping other farmers move cattle from one farm to another or to a farm that wasn't their own just to make sure animals were fed and cared for. This created a lot of mental and financial stress for farmers and was a very emotional time for everyone involved.

Being active in Farm Bureau has taught us a lot of things. One of which is to reach out to our elected officials when we have both good news and also when we would like some help. So this was a time when we felt the need to reach out to Secretary Designee Pfaff, to ask if he would be able to come to Trempealeau and Buffalo County to witness first hand the hardships some of our local farmers were going through. When he agreed, it was such a sense of relief to tell a few of these farmers that they mattered and that that whole state of Wisconsin was thinking about them! These farmers were in a mental state that we have never seen before. Truly their livelihoods were on the line.

We met in Arcadia and as we were driving up to the first farm, I will never forget the look on Secretary Designee Pfaff's face when he witnessed first hand the aftermath of what was a nightmare these farmers were going through. Before we even made it to the first farm, he made the comment to the effect that this was so much worse than he could have ever imagined.

When he was talking with farmers who were impacted by the barn collapses, you didn't have to hear his words to know he cared; you could see it in his eyes, through his actions and his emotions! He not only cares for Wisconsin agriculture, he cares for Wisconsin Farmers!

We spent the better part of a day touring and talking with farmers that had their lives turned upside down because of the devastation that Mother Nature had caused. Our intent was not to ask the state for money. The goal was to show that even though they felt alone, their neighbors as well as their very own Secretary of Agriculture Designee cared enough for them to help them out, even if it was to just listen to their story of what they were going through.

It's easy to understand how stops at these farms would last longer than expected. The office of the Secretary Designee said that Brad would be available to tour farms from 9:30am to noon. We had only visited two of the four farms before our time was running out from when we said we would get Brad back on the road. As a testament to not only who Brad is as a Secretary Designee, but to who Brad is as a person, he insisted on visiting the rest of the farms we had scheduled no matter how long it took to visit. Nearly four hours after we said Brad would be done, we finally got him back on the road.

We followed up with all of the farmers in our counties to ask them what they thought of the meeting. All of them thanked us for bringing Secretary Designee Pfaff to their farm. Even though they still had a mess to clean up, cattle that were on farms miles away from their own, and months of rebuilding; they all agreed that Brad's visit truly helped them make it through the long rebuilding process.

As Wisconsin farmers, and leaders of our county Farm Bureau's, we ask that you vote in favor of confirming Brad Pfaff to be our Wisconsin Secretary of Agriculture. Given the mental and financial hardships a lot of Wisconsin farmers are going through at the current time, we feel it is vital that we keep him in place.

Once again, on behalf of the Trempealeau and Buffalo County Farm Bureau, thank you for taking the time to read our message and we would be very grateful if you would vote yes to confirm Brad Pfaff.

Sincerely,



Shane Goplin
President
Trempealeau County Farm Bureau



Ed Rippley
President
Buffalo County Farm Bureau







