

Health Or A Paycheck: Educators Face Difficult Challenges

Written by Palzewicz for Wisconsin, Chelsea Cross
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Teachers must make personal decisions on risks and costs as they consider whether or not to go back into the classroom.

Brookfield, WI – Teachers are people, too. Parents need to go to work, but with the pandemic, that may not be possible. Even without a public health crisis, it's difficult to manage work and family. Teachers have to face the same risks as parents in going to work. That is why Democrat Tom Palzewicz, running for Wisconsin's Fifth Congressional District seat, wants a coordinated, national plan for education.



"How many parents have the ability to decide which one of them is not going back to work?" Palzewicz asked. "How many single parent households are there? How many dual income households are there that don't have the ability to do that? And we're not talking about it. Not supplying in an increased amount of unemployment pay is also really putting people in a tight bind. And now we're going to start the school year yet people are just supposed to pretend like they can do their jobs and the kids are going to get educated. And that's just school. What about

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childcare? To me the bigger thing is that it's actually the teachers and the daycare providers we're putting at risk and we have no answers for them."

Teachers' unions have been outspoken about safety, and non-union teachers will have to make the same decisions on whether or not to go back into the classroom.

"As a teacher, you either have to decide to go back or not go back. And if you're not going back, you're not getting paid," said Palzewicz. "I don't know how many teachers have the luxury of not getting paid. I just saw a teacher who made the decision not to go back. And that's a heart-wrenching decision because it sounds like she's an amazing teacher, but she was put into a position where she had to choose her health over her profession.

"Schools are working on social distancing and creating safe classrooms and I fully understand the desire to have the kids back in school, but at what price? Are students and teachers being tested? With no job and no benefits, because of the pandemic, healthcare becomes an even more critical issue. If we had universal healthcare, we could take care of teachers who need to opt-out of the classroom because of health concerns. People wouldn't have to make that dreadful decision."

Palzewicz is running for Congress to help create more sustainable policies on all of these issues, to help parents and childcare workers.