



Dear friends,

When Republicans in the majority sent the Assembly home for the year on February 18, it was the earliest that the Assembly has adjourned in nearly 50 years.

As members of the minority party, Assembly Democrats put forward meaningful alternatives throughout the session. Unfortunately much work was left undone.

Consider these examples:

[Assembly Bill 228](#) would expand access to cannabidiol oil (CBD) so that families can obtain **CBD to treat children with severe epilepsy** suffering from seizures. In 2014, the legislature passed and Gov. Walker signed “Lydia’s Law” which allowed for the purchase of CBD, but unfortunately the law was too restrictive to benefit patients. AB 228 makes important fixes to that law and was widely supported and passed the Assembly on a voice vote. It has been [reported](#) that the objection of only three Senators (one of whom is retiring) stopped the bill.

[Rep. Shankland](#) and [Rep. Wachs](#) introduced legislation ([AB 897](#)) that would have **increased state funding for need-based financial aid** for UW System and Wisconsin Technical College students. With student loan debt weighing down our economy and holding people back from achieving their dreams, this bill would have provided financial relief to more than 36,000 students who were denied need-based aid they qualified for during the 2014-2015 academic year because of insufficient Republican investment in the program. Unfortunately, the bill never even received a committee hearing.

A number of bills authored by Rep. Hesselbein **that would assist veterans** were stalled in Republican committees, including a bill ([AB 88](#)) which would have allowed nonresident military personnel stationed in Wisconsin to pay the residential rate for

state park permits, and a proposal ([AB 510](#)) which would have added mental illness treatment and drug abuse treatment to the expenses eligible for emergency DVA vouchers. This important bill was not allowed a floor debate or vote. Veterans deserved better.

Democratic solutions to better fund Wisconsin roads and infrastructure were also ignored. Wisconsin's roads are [third-worst](#) in the nation and we put forward solutions to create more sustainable funding solutions for our roads, led by [Rep. Kahl](#) and Democrats on both the Transportation and Finance committees. While we offered more-responsible funding alternatives, Republicans instead continued to borrow funds and kicked the can down the road.

There was also no help for our struggling schools, or accountability for taxpayer-funded voucher schools. In fact, Republicans changed state funding so now taxpayer-funded voucher schools take funds directly from local public schools. This change will mean that [up to \\$800 million](#) over the next decade will go from public schools to private schools. Republicans also voted a few times against the **Democratic Fair Funding proposal** ([AB 482](#)) which would better fund our schools. As a final blow to schools, at the end of session Republicans amended a bill in order to divert [an additional \\$5 million](#) from public schools.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, there was no action to grow our economy and middle class. More than a year ago, Assembly Democrats put forward a ["15 for 2015" Economic Opportunity Agenda](#) to promote economic opportunity and grow our economy. We also put forward a [Bring Back the Middle Class](#) plan to address the issues that keep Wisconsinites awake at night. Simple policy changes such as allowing student loan refinancing (our [Higher Ed, Lower Debt](#) bill), raising the wage, earned sick days and retirement security would go a long way to rebuild Wisconsin's struggling middle class.

It was a disappointing session, but we hope you will continue to use your voice. We hear you and we will keep fighting for our future and working hard to create opportunities for everyone to succeed.

Sincerely,

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Rep. David Bowen	Rep. Jonathan Brostoff	Rep. Dave Considine	Rep. Chris Danou
Rep. Steve Doyle	Rep. Eric Genrich	Rep. Evan Goyke	Rep. Gary Hebl
Rep. Dianne Hesselbein	Rep. Gordon Hintz	Rep. LaTonya Johnson	Rep. Andy Jorgensen
Rep. Robb Kahl	Rep. Fred Kessler	Rep. Debra Kolste	Rep. Cory Mason
Rep. Beth Meyers	Rep. Nick Milroy	Rep. Tod Ohnstad	Rep. Sindy Pope
Rep. Melissa	Rep. Katrina		

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Rep. Daniel Riemer	Rep. Melissa Sargent	Rep. Hanna Shankland	Rep. Chris Sinicki
Rep. Mark Spreitzer	Rep. Amanda Stuck	Rep. Lisa Subeck	Rep. Chris Taylor
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Wisconsin Assembly Democrats

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