

OCTOBER 19 REP. OHNSTAD REPORT

After not scheduling a single floor session in three months, the Republicans used the one day session this month to once again consolidate more power. Prescription drug costs and greater access to healthcare, background checks, the dark store loophole, student loan debt, child care, workforce development and farm foreclosures, medical marijuana reform are just some examples of bills which could have been scheduled. Instead, they used most of the day changing the house rules for another power grab for their gerrymandered super majority.

What is even worse is they did it by wrapping them into a bill that finally makes some accommodations (but not all that I believe the Americans with Disabilities Act requires) for Representative Jimmy Anderson, a legislator who is a quadriplegic after a tragic car accident left him paralyzed. Representative Anderson has been pressing legislative leaders all year for the ability to attend committee meetings by phone rather than in person – a system that is already common practice in the State Senate – when he is unable to attend for medical reasons.

One bright spot from the floor session was honoring Kenosha Police Officer Nick Benvenuto as the First Responder of the Year. It was great to meet his family and friends and honor him for his heroic actions.

There has been quite a bit of committee activity in the last month. Four of the committees I serve on met. Workforce Development, State Affairs, Jobs & Economy and Ways and Means held Public Hearings, Informational Hearings and/or Executive Votes on bills. A bill I have authored received a unanimous vote in Ways and Means and I will continue to work on it to getting it signed into law. When it was pointed out to me at the beginning of the session that there are

approximately 20,000 federal retirees who have their civil service pensions taxed by the state, unlike most retirees who draw Social Security and are not taxed, I began working on this. Hopefully I can get this done this session.

I also met with a representative from the US Census Bureau on preparing for the upcoming census. When asked, I was pleased to do a video message on the importance of our Dementia Specialists. On a related note I was also pleased to speak at the Walk for a Cure for Alzheimer's at UW-Parkside. At another speaking opportunity I was happy to join District Attorney Mike Graveley and Representative Tip McGuire at the Rally for Recovery. A legislative dinner was held with area dentists and oral hygiene professionals to discuss issues they have on bills circulating in the Capitol.

Kenosha County unveiled their POW/MIA Remembrance Chair monument in a moving ceremony. My office continues to work toward a similar memorial in the State Capitol. Mayor Antaramian gave his vision for the future of Kenosha to a sold out crowd at an event sponsored by the Kenosha County Chamber of Commerce. These are exciting times in Kenosha. A great fundraiser was held for the first year in Kenosha to end human Trafficking. A ribbon cutting for the Grand Re-Opening of Captain Mike's was held and it is always exciting to meet new business owners. Lemon Street Gallery celebrated its 20th Anniversary and were awarded plaques by the mayor and area legislators. They have done an amazing job in creating the Union Park Arts District. Area legislators are so fortunate to display their art in our offices.

As always, if you have any ideas, concerns, or a state related problem we can help with don't hesitate to contact my office. We can be

reached by phone at (608) 266-0455 or by email at rep.ohnstad@legis.wi.gov.