**November 7, 2015 Contact: Rep. Considine, (608) 266-7746**

**COLUMN: Working Together to Rebuild Wisconsin**

**By Rep. Dave Considine (D-Baraboo)**

As I travel around the 81st Assembly District, one of the things I hear most often from my constituents is that they are tired of watching politicians in Madison fight over issues that don’t reflect their priorities. When we look at some of the policies the Legislature has passed this session, it is easy to understand why so many people feel this way.

Wisconsinites have asked for a government that values their voice and is truly accountable to voters. Despite widespread objections, Republicans in the Legislature voted recently to allow more money to flood political campaigns with less transparency, eliminate an essential tool for prosecuting political corruption, and dismantle the very organization that keeps our government accountable to you.

We all share the belief that our children deserve a high-quality education. Yet my colleagues in the majority have made severe cuts to our world-class university system, including UW-Extension and Colleges, and diverted millions of taxpayer dollars from public schools to unaccountable private voucher schools. We all need functional roads, especially in our rural communities, but Republican legislative leaders continue to focus on loosening protections for our environment, minimizing citizen voices in government, and many more concerning policies.

As the Legislature heads into its recess over the holidays, many people have been left wondering: what do we do next? How can we get Wisconsin back on its feet and put our government back in the hands of the people?

One first step is to be better advocates for Wisconsin workers. With broad support from citizens of all political views, my Democratic colleagues and I have proposed a package of legislation called the “15 for 2015” Economic Opportunity agenda. This collection of 15 bills is designed to help create good-paying jobs, connect workers with available employment, increase wages, and make our state more competitive. Similarly, our “Bring Back the Middle Class” package would boost retirement security and provide relief from high child-care costs and student debt. These goals belong to all of us, Republican or Democrat, and I hope to see my Republican colleagues support them in the coming months.

As we work to rebuild our economy, we also need to focus on building and supporting our communities from the ground up. At every level of local government, our elected friends and neighbors are tasked with serving us and dealing with a wide variety of issues that affect us every day. Yet my colleagues in the majority have repeatedly worked to override their local control and authority.

We should be raising up the entrepreneurs, hardworking people, and kids that symbolize the future of Wisconsin. Together, we can continue to advocate for an agenda that fosters economic opportunity and fairness for all. We can build our communities, strengthen relationships, and rebuild the cooperative spirit and ethic that make the 81st District and Wisconsin great.

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