



Rep. Turner makes a point during a meeting of the Assembly Labor Committee.

Turner Favors Mining Protections

Two pieces of mining legislation were supported by Rep. Turner this session. Both of these bills passed the State Senate, but were not advanced by the State Assembly, due to Republican opposition. Senate Bill 160 would prohibit the use of cyanide in metallic mining. Senate Bill 271 would prohibit the Department of Natural Resources from granting exemptions from its

own rules regulating the storage and disposal of solid waste and hazardous waste as they relate to mining waste. During his career in the Legislature, Representative Turner has been a consistent supporter of legislation to regulate the mining industry under the same environmental guidelines as other industries.

Turner Sponsors Bill to Expand Foreign Language Options

This session, Rep. Turner authored 2001 Assembly Bill 817, relating to grants for new foreign language programs. The bill provides a pilot program for school districts to introduce a new foreign language to their curriculum by providing planning and implementation funds for three school districts statewide. School districts wishing to participate would submit an application to the State

Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Any language not currently taught in a given school district would be considered by the DPI for approval.

Assembly Bill 817 was introduced late in the session and remained in the Assembly Education Committee when the Legislature adjourned. Rep. Turner hopes to reintroduce this proposal next session.



International students from Racine Gateway Technical College's English as a Second Language Program chat with Representative Turner during their visit to the State Capitol.



Rep. Turner and members of GCIU Local 254 present smiling faces at their annual picnic at Pritchard Park.

Good News for Veterans

During the 2001-2002 session, Representative Turner co-sponsored a number of veterans' bills, all of which were signed into law. These new laws include the following:

Assembly Bill 509, restores full tuition reimbursement for members of the Wisconsin National Guard.

Assembly Bill 571, gives members of the U.S. armed forces and National Guard who are called into active state service the same protections as federal law, including a 6% interest rate on obligations incurred before entry into the armed forces, and additional protections related to lawsuits, leases, obligations and contracts.

Assembly Bill 560, grants exemption from the 12% federal late tax filing interest rate for those who serve in support of Operation Enduring Freedom or a successor operation.

Assembly Bill 558, extends expiration dates for professional or occupational licenses, and secures tuition reimbursement or opportunities to complete classes for students who are called into active duty.

AB 468, adds a member of the Wisconsin chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America to the Council on Veterans Programs.



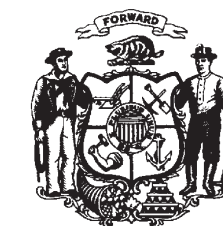
Wisconsin State Assembly
P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 1749
Madison, WI

State Representative Robert Turner

Spring 2002



Dear Friends:

I hope this message finds you in good health and good spirits. As the Legislature wraps up its 2001-2003 session, I would like to take this opportunity to update you on some of the issues we have addressed. I have highlighted some of the legislation that I have promoted, such as a prescription drug plan for the elderly, a higher minimum wage, funding for the SAGE (Student Achievement Guarantee in Education) program, small employer health insurance, a worker's first law, safe staffing for quality health care, and protection of our state's natural resources by banning cyanide in all types of mining and eliminating special treatment for mining companies.

This legislative session has been one of the most challenging ever. We began working on a state budget last Spring, which was signed by Governor McCallum on August 30, 2001. However, since that time, the events of September 11th, coupled with a nationwide recession, resulted in a state budget deficit of \$1.1 billion. As one way of addressing this major shortfall in revenues, the Governor has proposed cutting and eventually eliminating Wisconsin's shared revenue program, and has accused local officials of being "big spenders."

I don't agree with the Governor's plan to fund the state's budget deficit on the backs of local governments. On February 14th, 2002, I held a listening session in Racine, along with my colleagues Senator Plache and Representative Lehman, to discuss the proposed cuts in the shared revenue formula. Of the 186 persons registering at the meeting, only 2 persons indicated their support for the Governor's plan, and 184 registered against it.

Under the Governor's plan, the City of Racine stands to lose \$3.2 million in 2002. The State Assembly wants to cut the shared revenue program in half, eliminating \$2.8 million from Racine's funding, beginning in 2003. The State Senate voted to leave the shared revenue program intact. It remains to be seen what the Legislature will finally decide with respect to shared revenue, since deliberations are ongoing as we go to print. But if the budget deficit plan is not altered to restore the state's current shared revenue structure and funding levels, I will not support it.

I have also included information on other legislative initiatives I have authored, including the new Temporary Supplemental Benefits program for unemployment compensation recipients, and a bill to allow school districts to apply for grants to teach additional foreign languages which they currently do not provide.

Lastly, I have included some helpful state government telephone numbers, and encourage you to save this handy information for future reference.

As always, I want to thank all of you who supported me and contacted me with your concerns during my sixth term as your State Representative. I am honored to serve you, and I look forward to continued success in representing you in the State Assembly. I appreciate and depend on your guidance on issues that affect us here in Racine, as well as all around our beautiful state.

Sincerely,

ROBERT L. TURNER
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
61st Assembly District

How to Contact Rep. Robert Turner

Office:

Room 109 North
State Capitol, P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708-8953
(608) 266-0731 or (888) 529-0061
Fax: (608) 282-3661
Toll-Free Legislative
Hotline: (800) 362-9472
E-Mail: Rep.Turner@legis.state.wi.us

Home:

36 McKinley Avenue
Racine, WI 53404
(262) 634-7371

Committee Assignments:

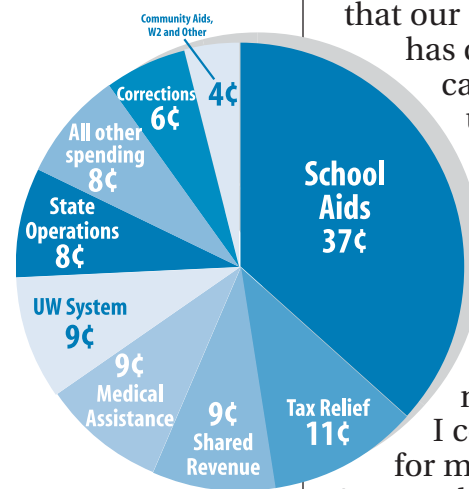
- Labor & Workforce Development, Ranking Member
- Ways & Means
- Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules
- Tax & Spending Limitations
- Assistant Chair, Assembly Democratic Caucus

Helpful State Government Numbers:

- Aging & Long Term Care Hotline1-800-242-1060
- Business Helpline1-800-435-7287
- Consumer Protection . . .1-800-422-7128
- Crime Victim Services . . .1-800-446-6564
- Low-Income Housing Loans (WHEIDA)1-800-334-6873
- Nursing Home Complaints Hotline1-414-227-4916
- Road Conditions1-800-762-3947
- Tourist Information1-800-372-2737
- Veterans' Loans & Grants 1-800-947-8387

Wisconsin Budget Overview

HOW A TAX DOLLAR IS SPENT IN WISCONSIN



*Totals may not equal \$1 due to rounding
Source: Legislative Fiscal Bureau

Two years ago, our budget situation was much rosier than it is today. The major question the Legislature faced was whether to give state taxpayers a tax rebate, and if so, how much? This situation was brought about due to larger than expected state revenues in 1999-2000. However, I voted against returning this money, because I had concerns that our state's reserves would be depleted if some emergency materialized.

Today it is difficult to believe that our state's fiscal scenario has changed so dramatically, in some measure, beyond our control. Despite the current budget shortfall, the original budget bill that was enacted on August 30, 2001, contained a number of items that I consider important for my constituents.

Among those programs are the following:

- **Education**— Full funding of the smaller class size (SAGE) program for grades K-3 (allows 15 students to every one teacher) and continued support for four-year-old kindergarten.
- **Prescription Drug Relief for Seniors (Senior Care)**— Providing 260,000 seniors across the state with an average annual savings of \$920 on costly medical prescriptions. All Wisconsin Medicaid-certified pharmacies will participate.
- **BadgerCare**— Protecting access to this program, which had been slated for

premium increases and longer waiting periods by Assembly Republicans.

- **Environmental Safeguards**—Protecting the state's recycling program, a \$112 million increase for the Stewardship Program (which includes our first new state forest in 30 years, the Peshtigo River State Forest), and a ban on oil and gas drilling in the Great Lakes. The state's Forestry Program was also kept as part of the Department of Natural Resources, which will ensure an environmentally balanced Forestry program for the future.

Other programs included in the budget that benefit the Racine area directly include:

Technology

- A \$100,000 annual grant for the Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center in Racine to assist in providing continued job training and re-training for Racine-area residents.
- The creation of the Pegasus Partnership between Racine Unified School District and Karen Johnson Productions, Inc. This venture will offer important computer training opportunities for teachers and pupils.

Children's Programs

- \$1 million annual funding for a high quality child care demonstration project in Racine County to increase the number of accredited child care providers.
- An increase in aid of \$220,500 for county children with disabilities education boards. Racine is one of only



Racine members of the Wisconsin Citizen Action Coalition meet with Rep. Turner and Rep. John Lehman during their annual lobby day to discuss legislative budget priorities.

four counties in Wisconsin with such a board.

Veterans

- The funding of 28 staff positions to serve the new community-based residential facility at Southern Wisconsin Veterans Retirement Center.

Elderly

- \$60,000 in start-up funds to establish a new Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP) site in Racine County. This program provides acute and long-term care services to elderly and disabled people who are eligible for nursing home care.

Corrections

- A requirement that the Department of Corrections must minimize the density of sex offender residential populations.

Environment

- \$375,000 in state Stewardship Funds for the Root River Pathway Project.

Now, like many states around the nation, Wisconsin is faced with a budget shortfall. The deficit is estimated to be \$1.1 billion. Governor McCallum has proposed balancing the budget through eliminating the shared revenue program to local governments and by borrowing against our state's Tobacco Settlement endowment monies. I am very opposed to eliminating the shared revenue program, and will work to see that the shared revenue program is preserved. Elimination of the shared revenue program would be extremely detrimental to the City of Racine, and would lead to cuts in services and property tax increases.

I will also work to see that the budget deficit plan that passes is fairly balanced by cuts at the state level, and not on the backs of local governments.

2002 Legislative Highlights

Turner: UC Benefits Extended

This session, Representative Turner, ranking Democrat on the Assembly Labor Committee, co-authored Assembly Bill 742, a bill to extend unemployment compensation benefits for up to 8 weeks for Wisconsin Workers. The Temporary Supplemental Benefits (TSB) program will cover approximately 95,000 Wisconsin Workers who have exhausted all of their unemployment compensation benefits. Wisconsin was the first state in the country to enact an extended benefits program for UC recipients.

Within a month after Wisconsin took the lead on this issue, Congress enacted a federal extended benefits program, which will extend benefits nationwide for all UC exhaustees for up to 13 weeks. Basic features of the new law include:

- The bill would provide temporary supplemental unemployment benefits to workers who have used all of their regular UC benefits.
- To be eligible for any week of benefits, a worker must:

- Have started a new benefits year on or after March 11, 2001;
- Have exhausted all regular benefits and still be unemployed;
- Not be eligible for regular benefits in a new benefit year.
- The maximum amount payable is 13 times the individual's regular benefit rate, or 50% of the regular benefits received in the exhausted claim, whichever is less.
- The weekly benefit rate is

the same as for the exhausted claim.

- Benefits are payable only for weeks of unemployment beginning on March 10, 2002, and ending on December 28, 2002.
- If the UC exhaustee is still unemployed after the initial 13 weeks of federal benefits have been paid, they can apply for an additional 13 weeks of benefits if the State of Wisconsin has an insured unemployment compensation rate of 4% or higher at the time of application.



Rep. Turner accepts a pen from Governor McCallum during bill signing ceremonies for Unemployment Compensation and Worker's Compensation legislation.

Turner Promotes Legislation for Working Families and Health Care Security

During the 2001-2003 legislative session, Representative Turner co-sponsored and supported bills to help working families and obtain health care security for those who remain uninsured or under-insured. A brief summary of these bills follows:

- T-Rx "Total Prescription" Drug Coverage, uses the state's purchasing power to leverage lower prescription costs for state residents who are not covered by Medical Assistance, Badger Care or Senior Care.
- Mental Health Parity, provides the same coverage for mental illnesses as physical illnesses in health insurance policies.
- Quality Care, abolishes forced overtime for health care workers, reducing the risk to patients of staff fatigue and medical errors.
- Small Employer Health Insurance, stabilizes premiums and gives small businesses access to a health insurance purchasing pool.
- Workers First, ensures that if a company goes bankrupt, the workers are first in line to be paid before other creditors.
- Minimum Wage bill, raises the state's minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$6.80 an hour.

- Equal Pay Enforcement, provides some teeth to the current laws which prohibit wage discrimination based on gender. Wisconsin women currently earn only 59 cents for every dollar men earn. Closing this wage gap would put an average of \$5,000 in the pockets of every working family in Wisconsin.



Rep. Turner swears in officers of Racine's AFL-CIO, from left to right: Marc DeJarlais, president; Sherry Hartog-Connelly, treasurer; board members Scott Sharp and Dan Fandry; Frank Krepelan, sergeant-at-arms; and John Mandli, Sr., trustee.

Law Keeps Telemarketing Calls Away

Tired of telemarketers interrupting your family's dinner? Until now, there has been little that a consumer can do to protect their privacy from telephone solicitations. But now there is good news. A new state law will give you the power to stop telemarketers from bothering your family during dinner or any other time of day.

Four years ago, legislation was introduced to create a "do-not-call" list to keep telemarketers from bothering you with unwanted phone calls. Finally, this law has now passed. The new law will allow you to place your name on a list of people who do not want to receive telemarketing calls at home. Telemarketers will have to obtain the list before they are allowed to call any Wisconsin homes, and will face penalties if they call anyone on the do-not-call list.

Of course, those who don't mind telemarketing calls can continue to receive them by simply not putting their names on the list.

Any company making telemarketing calls to Wisconsin residents will have to register with the state and pay a fee every year. The fee will be used to maintain the do-not-call list. Telemarketers who obtain the list will be prohibited from selling the list or any information on it.

The state's Consumer Protection agency is now developing rules for the new law. Soon, you will have the opportunity to put your name on the do-not-call list. The new law will go into effect later this year. The opportunity to put your name on the list will be widely publicized.

As the Legislature originally passed it, the law applied to all telemarketers. The Governor used a partial veto, however, to create an exemption for charitable and fraternal organizations and political parties. Even with these exemptions, the new law will give Wisconsin citizens an opportunity to prevent many unwanted calls.