



---

## REP. HESSELBEIN OP-ED ON 2013-15 STATE BUDGET

*For immediate release June 23, 2013*

*Contact: 608-266-5340*

No matter where you live in Wisconsin, who you are or what you do for a living, we now share one thing in common: we will all experience the negative impact of the extreme, anti-middleclass budget Republican legislators just passed.

**The Republican budget punishes our public schools.** Republicans removed a record \$1.6 billion from our public schools in the last budget, and gave \$40 million more to unaccountable private voucher schools in southeastern Wisconsin. Now their latest budget expands taxpayer-funded private vouchers statewide.

That means every rural and urban community in the state could be subject to devastating public school cuts and property tax increases. It is an enormous waste of taxpayer money and forces people to fund two parallel school systems at a time when public schools educate the vast majority of our kids – and whose students routinely outperformed their voucher school counterparts.

**The Republican budget hurts people who need health care.** For purely partisan and ideological reasons, Republicans voted to reject federal funding available under the Affordable Care Act that would insure an additional 85,000 people and actually saved Wisconsin taxpayers \$120 million. Their decision defies common sense and is harmful to farmers, small business owners and countless others across our state that will have to pay more for less.

**The Republican budget is bad for middleclass taxpayers.** In addition to their logic-defying decision to refuse federal health care funding, Republicans voted for a tax plan that overwhelmingly benefits our wealthiest citizens. The Republican tax plan increases property taxes, turns a \$700 million-plus surplus into a deficit of more than \$500 million, and gives people making more than \$300,000 a tax break 10 times higher than the median household receives.

**The Republican budget punishes agriculture and family farms.** Agriculture is a more than \$59 billion-a-year industry in Wisconsin that creates one of every ten Wisconsin jobs. Yet programs like the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative – which helps beginning farmers – and the Agricultural Development and Diversification program – which has a 19-to-1 return on investment while creating more than 700 jobs – are eliminated under the Republican budget.

Simply put, our state is on a disastrously wrong path to economic improvement. Because of the last Republican budget, Wisconsin's economy already lags behind most states. We are 44<sup>th</sup> in job growth, 45<sup>th</sup> in wage growth, 49<sup>th</sup> in economic outlook, and most significantly, dead last in short-term job growth. Despite the undisputed facts, the Republican Assembly majority ignored the numbers and continued in establishing an extreme state budget that doubles down on the failed policies of the past two years.



-2-

My constituents communicated their priorities to me during the past several months, and their message is clear: they want reinvestment in our public schools, more access to affordable, high-quality health care, a fair market environment for small business owners and family farms, and fairness for middle-class taxpayers. They want a state government that works for all Wisconsinites, not merely the wealthy.

The state budget was passed by the majority Republican Legislature, and we will all have to deal with the resulting impact to our state. We cannot change this budget nor mitigate the impact in the short term, but we must restore Wisconsin's economic viability in the long term; this fight is far from over. I will continue to meet with people in the coming weeks and months to discuss the budget, learn from each other and work together to build the plan that puts Wisconsin back on the right path.

*Democratic Representative Dianne Hesselbein was elected in 2012 and represents western Dane County in the 79<sup>th</sup> Assembly District.*

###