

The Sargent Voice

Representative Melissa Sargent

48th Assembly District

Issue 22

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As we enter Thanksgiving week, I like to stop and take stock of all the things that we have to be thankful for. As your state representative, I am fortunate to live in the state I love and grew up in. I'm also thankful that I get to work each day to provide a better future for our community and for all Wisconsinites.

This week, I encourage everyone to slow down and enjoy time with your families, and to cherish the traditions that for generations to come. We all love eating a big Thanksgiving dinner and watching the Packers, but make sure to also take a moment to have a great conversation with your family and friends and enjoy the quality time with them.

Finally, let me say that I am thankful for all of my constituents who it is such an honor to represent. Know that I do not take one day for granted, and that I will always stand up for what I believe to be the right path forward for our state.

Sincerely,

Melissa

Last Day of Session Brings Extreme Agenda to the Floor

On the last day of regular session of the Wisconsin Legislature for 2013, the GOP continued to tread on the people of Wisconsin.

They did not address the real need for more family sustaining jobs. They did not expand health care coverage to our friends and neighbors across Wisconsin. They did not take the much needed steps to bring a more clean and transparent government to Wisconsin.

Instead, there was an extensive 13-hour calendar filled with extreme and divisive bills as well as a true lack of respect and decorum for the people and the process.

The session went late into the night and early the next day. We all know nothing good happens for the people of our State when this legislature meets after midnight.

RECALLS: First, there were two bills which changed the way in which recall elections will operate. Under these bills, only under instances of felonies or ethics violations would the public be able to recall their elected officials. I believe that both state and local leaders should be held accountable to the people who elect them, and that if the community we

represent wishes to attempt to make a change through a recall election because they were lied to, it is their right to do so.

VOTER ID: The Assembly GOP also passed a new voter ID bill that modifies the controversial 2011 voter ID law which is currently before the courts. This is a bill in search of a nonexistent problem. All of this in an effort to increase its chance of surviving a new court challenge. This creates more red tape, doesn't protect the sanctity of your vote and challenges a fundamental right in our country - the right of one person one vote. Under this new bill, voters would only be able to cast a ballot without ID if they signed an affidavit swearing that they are too poor to afford ID or had no way of gaining access to their birth certificate. This is anti-democratic and an abuse of power.

ACCESS TO YOUR BALLOT: The GOP majority voted to limit our local clerks' office hours to 40 hours per week only on weekdays and also eliminate weekend ballot access. This bill will make our elected clerks jobs more difficult; will make our voting lines longer and likely decrease voter turnout across our state. We know that by again overriding local control and mandating fewer absentee voting hours, they are not allowing our communities the ability to address their differing voter needs. This is yet another blatant voter suppression tactic.

SUPREME COURT: Finally, we voted on a Constitutional Amendment which will change the process used to choose the Chief Justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. The resolution, which also passed on a party line vote, changes the 100 year old system entirely. Historically, the Chief Justice is chosen by seniority, but this new legislation would have the court members vote on who they want to be the Chief Justice. Considering the conservative majority on our court, this is yet another power grab by the Republicans to gain power over the Supreme Court as well as the Governor's office and State Legislature. The insertion of politics into our supposed nonpartisan courts is extremely concerning. Rather than helping the people of Wisconsin and creating jobs we continue to see GOP bills that are blatant attempts to silence the voices of the majority of the people of Wisconsin.

Redistricting Reform Rejected by the GOP

All of the problems we saw on the last session day lead to one glaring, obvious solution: Wisconsin needs redistricting reform now.

I was proud to stand as one of the 14 Democratic Assembly freshmen who have called for redistricting reform. The 14 of us stood, speaking one after another, on the last day of session for 2013, on the Assembly floor calling on the GOP leadership to bring our nonpartisan redistricting bill forward for discussion and a vote.

Despite the fact that there is a ground swell of support for our common-sense legislation across the state, once again the people of Wisconsin were not heard by the GOP and partisan gridlock won out.

Wisconsin currently uses a legislative redistricting process, where the maps are drawn up by the majority parties in the Legislature, are voted on by the Senate and Assembly, and are then signed by the governor. If the Legislature cannot agree on a redistricting plan, as is usually the case with split houses, the Supreme Court steps in to finalize the new legislative districts. For the past 50 years, Wisconsin's elected officials have had to work together with bipartisan cooperation or leave the task of redistricting up to the courts. This was the first time in 60 years that one political party had complete control over the redistricting process, causing Wisconsin to seriously consider if its current process is best for Wisconsin's democracy.

The bill we pulled to the floor for a vote by the Assembly would have replaced the current process and instead create a nonpartisan commission to draw new legislative and congressional lines after each Census. Unfortunately, despite the maps being criticized for being drawn in secret and to gain a political advantage by newspaper editorials across the state, costing taxpayers \$2.1 million to defend them in court, and growing support for a new system, Assembly Republicans rejected the bill. As a result, Republican legislators will continue to have the power to pick their voters in order to save their jobs.

I know that with fair and transparent redistricting, the extreme Tea Party bills that are moving through Wisconsin that are attacking voting rights, workers' rights, women's rights, the environment, and so much more; would not be happening.

I know that the real problem in Wisconsin is not that too many people are voting – it is that too few people are working. I'm not here because it's easy and I know there is a long road ahead but I pledge to work tirelessly, with each of you at my side, to rebuild Wisconsin's economy, to advocate for our hard-working families, and to bring decorum back to our statehouse. Redistricting reform could begin to heal the divide we face in our state, and to move us once again, forward.

Cell Phone Privacy Bill Introduced

I was pleased to reach across the aisle to work with Representative Rob Hutton (R-Brookfield) on a bill that will protect our citizens' privacy in relation to their cell phones and location data.

The bill was sent around for co-sponsorship this past week.

The cellphones we carry everywhere establish a clear log of our daily travels and can go a long way in telling the story of our lives. This information can be sensitive in nature and should be treated as such.

This bill (LRB 2077) requires law enforcement to get a search warrant for location information recorded by an electronic device. The law doesn't just cover cell phone metadata, but requires that law enforcement get a probable-cause warrant for tracking a suspect in a criminal investigation by social networking check-ins, or via a GPS tracking

device.

LRB 2077 follows the lead of the U.S. Supreme Court, which recently ruled that it was unconstitutional for police to install a GPS device on someone's car without a warrant. But GPS vehicle tracking isn't the only way to collect details on where you are and when. Our cell phones create a location data trail throughout the day as they ping nearby cell towers. Many other devices – like tablets – do the same, while mobile apps and other tools can collect even more detailed location information.

This data is a powerful tool for law enforcement, and should be available to police when it's appropriate. But this information is extraordinarily sensitive, revealing things like your place of worship, if you are visiting a medical clinic, and who you visit and meet with.

New data shows that law enforcement agencies across the country are collecting location data without a warrant or any court approval. This bill will protect our citizen's privacy and ensure that police have a standard protocol state-wide for obtaining this information.

There are exemptions in the bill due to time sensitive cases including:

- An emergency involving danger, death or serious physical injury to any person exists.
- The communication device is reported stolen by the owner.

This bill has already received bi-partisan support and it is my hope that it will pass through the Assembly and Senate during the January floor period.

Gov. Walker denies Health Care Coverage to 80,000 low-income Wisconsin citizens

Late last week Gov. Walker gave into intense public pressure and delayed kicking over 77,000 people off BadgerCare for 3 months.

But with Gov. Walker even good news tends to be undermined by very bad news.

Shockingly, it turns out Gov. Walker funds his delay in BadgerCare cuts by denying health care coverage to 80,000 of the lowest income Wisconsinites for three months.

Gov. Walker expects us to believe that the best way to maintain coverage for 77,000 people who he should never have cut from BadgerCare in the first place is to deny health coverage to 80,000 people.

It's wrong to fund health coverage for one group of Wisconsinites by denying it to another. Three months without health insurance is just too big a risk to ask 80,000 of Wisconsin's most vulnerable citizens to endure.

This is a clear and direct result of his refusal to take enhanced federal BadgerCare dollars

provided by the Affordable Care Act. Under the ACA, from 2014 through 2016, the federal government would pay 100 percent of the cost of expanding Medicaid coverage for adults with incomes up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level. For an individual, that means an income of \$15,282; for a family of four, it's \$31,322. After 2016, the federal share would gradually decline until it reaches 90 percent in 2020, with the states picking up the remaining cost. Wisconsin could also opt out at any time under this plan if we, as a state, decided that paying that 10 percent was too great of a burden.

Rejecting this \$2.4 billion in federal money comes at a cost to state taxpayers of \$119 million in 2013-2015 alone. In my book, spending more to insure less people is a glaring lose-lose situation for Wisconsin.

The Legislature is scheduled to take up Walker's ill-advised plan next week under a special session call. Instead of delaying access to healthcare for 80,000 people Gov. Walker and the legislature should reverse their decision to reject billions in federal money for BadgerCare.

For perspective, 80,000 people is approximately the number of people that fills Camp Randall stadium. That's a lot of people being delayed health care coverage!

BPDD 'Take Your Legislator to Work Day'

I was proud to take part in the Board for People with Developmental Disabilities, 'Take Your Legislator to Work Day'. I visited Jeremy at Prairie Athletic Club where he is in charge of cleaning 3 large workout areas. He wipes down the machinery and vacuums the carpet in these rooms. He does this 5 days a week.

Community integrated employment is so important for those with developmental disabilities. It engages them in a job which they can be proud of, gives them some spending money, and brings social interaction to their. Jeremy's mother told me of how happy he is to go to work each day and how he loves all the new friends he has met through this job.

I look forward to continuing to work with BPDD in the future, and wish Jeremy continued success in his job.

Stat of the Week

Some Thanksgiving stats nationwide:

- 21 million pounds of cranberry sauce are consumed.
- 45 million turkeys are cooked and eaten on Thanksgiving each year.
- 50 million pumpkin pies are eaten.

Quote of the Week

In honor of President John F. Kennedy who tragically died 50 years ago on Friday.

"Our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal."

-JFK (1963)

In the District

Madison College Community Show Choir Winter Concert ***Featuring Holiday Music!***

Mitby Theater

Sunday, December 8th at 2:00p.m

1701 Wright St, Madison, WI 53704

Blood Pressure Clinic

Come make sure your blood pressure is at the right level.

2nd Friday of each month at Noon

The FREE clinic is offered at Warner Park Community Center

All ages welcome

Provided by Interim Health Care

Mad City Ugly Sweater Run

November 30th - 10 a.m.

Go to event website by clicking [HERE](#)

WALK-UP REGISTRATION

1pm - 6pm - Friday, November 29

8am - 9:30am - Saturday, November 30

Grab your ugliest sweater (not required but recommended) or other festive clothing, lace up those running shoes and join the fun.

You have your choice of a scenic but challenging 5 Mile Fun-Run or a 5K Fun-Run.

Hunting Safety Tips

Hunting Safety Reminders - Firearm hunting incidents in 2011 followed a downward trend and came in below the 10-year average of 32 incidents annually.

The DNR is confident more can be prevented by following these four basic principles of firearm safety – also known as TABK:

- Treat every firearm as if it is loaded
- Always point the muzzle in a safe direction
- Be certain of your target and what is beyond it
- Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot

Energy Saving Tips

In the winter, when many people turn on their heaters and put up holiday lights, gas and electric bills can be much higher than usual.

According to the Department of Energy, a family spends more than \$1,900 a year on electricity bills and other utilities. A big part of those costs come from wasted energy during those cold months.

However, you can save on winter energy costs if you make some changes in certain areas of your home.

Lighting

- Improve the lighting in your home and save energy.
- Replace traditional light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs, which last between six and 12 times longer. Remember to turn off any lights that aren't in use.
- Consider using LED lights for Christmas decorations. These use 90 percent less energy than the standard Christmas lights.

Thermostats and heating

- Keep your home warm and comfortable.
Install a programmable thermostat for your home's heating system.
- Keep the doors and windows closed while the heat is on.
- Frequently change the filters in your furnace.
- Set the thermostat on your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

General tips

- Be energy efficient throughout your home.
- Only use the exhaust fan in the kitchen and bathrooms when necessary.
- Repair any water leaks in the bathrooms, kitchen, laundry room, etc.
- Use power strips to plug in portable heaters, television and cell phone chargers. That way, you can turn off the power switch when the devices are not in use.
- If you're thinking of replacing your appliances, make sure they have an Energy Star logo. Energy Star products are more energy efficient.

NFWL Woman of Excellence

Last week, I was honored to receive a 'Woman of Excellence' Award from the National Foundation for Women Legislators. I attended their conference in Washington D.C. where I was able to interact with countless women state legislators across the country.

These conferences are non-partisan and it is refreshing to share ideas without some of the divisive nature that we see too often here in Wisconsin. While Wisconsin does have a good number of women Representatives and Senators, we can continue to increase these numbers.

Some stats from around the country:

Congress

Women currently hold 18% (78) of the seats in the 113th Congress.

Senate - women hold 20% (20) of the 100 seats in the U.S. Senate.

House - women hold 17.9% (78) of the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Statewide Elective Offices:

Women hold 23.4% (76) of the 320 statewide elected executive offices across the country.

Governors - 5

Lieutenant Governors - 11

Attorneys General - 8

Secretaries of State - 12

State Legislatures:

Currently 24.2% (1,788) of the 7,383 state legislators in the nation are women. Since 1971, the number of women serving in the state legislatures has more than quintupled!

Women hold 20.8% (411) of the 1,972 state senate seats.

Women hold 25.4% (1,377) of the 5,411 state house seats.

Pinney Library Update

From District 15 Alder David Ahrens

As you may have heard, the re-location of the Pinney Library has been postponed until 2016. This means that the planning and design of the new library will take place in 2015. While not optimal, there may be some positive aspects to the postponement.

First, it gives the community more time to raise funds for its construction (about 80% will be paid by the City, but the community will have to raise funds as well). Second, we will get a better idea of how the library should be designed when we know the other function and design of other adjacent buildings. Third, although the City opened the Central library last month, fund raising for that project is ongoing. A new library is being built in the southwest section of the city this year. We may need a year off in new library construction.

Other good news: I think a general consensus exists that Pinney should be re-located to Royster Corners. It keeps the library in the same neighborhood while at the same time helps make Royster a more interesting and vital part of the community.