



ASSEMBLY REPUBLICAN AGENDA

FORWARD

FOR WISCONSIN'S FUTURE



WISCONSIN ASSEMBLY

GOP

OCTOBER 2014



ASSEMBLY REPUBLICAN AGENDA

Forward for Wisconsin's Future

Wisconsin Assembly Republicans want to do all that we can to **make the American Dream a reality**. We want every Wisconsinite to have the opportunity to land a good-paying job, every child to have a quality education, and every neighborhood to be safe.

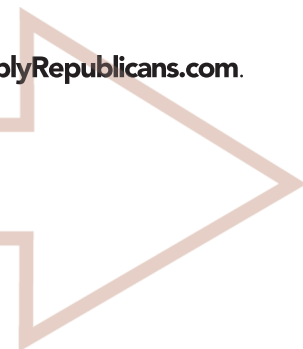
The Assembly Republican Forward Agenda is a broad outline of goals for Wisconsin's future. It has ideas for tomorrow and the next generation. Assembly Republicans know that in order to build a better Wisconsin, we must build upon the state's conservative foundation of smaller government and lower taxes.

The future has never looked brighter in Wisconsin. In the past four years, Republicans have made great strides in repairing the damage left by our predecessors. The state's economy has improved, unemployment is down significantly, and more businesses are opening their doors. We've cut taxes by \$2 billion, paid off the backlog of bills, and gave local governments the flexibility to balance their own budgets.

The Forward Agenda includes goals and ideas for the next legislative session and beyond. It focuses on five areas: building a stronger economy, building tomorrow's workforce, improving the quality of life, creating a pathway to the American Dream and preparing for tomorrow. We want **an even better business climate, a more efficient government** and **successful schools**. We also want to help more people achieve **self-sufficiency** by opening the door of opportunity a little wider.

You play an important role in shaping Wisconsin's future. Share your ideas at www.WisconsinAssemblyRepublicans.com.

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Improving the business climate, lowering taxes and eliminating government red tape

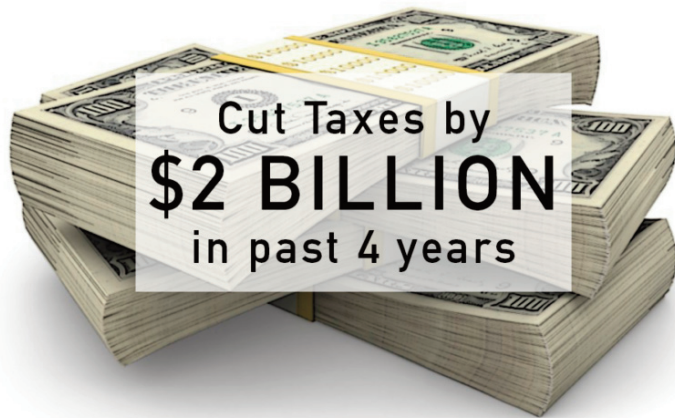
All across the state new businesses are being created and existing businesses are thriving. Wisconsin's unemployment rate remains below the national level. Worker training programs are producing a talented labor market for business owners to choose from, and **96 percent of Wisconsin job creators believe our state is headed in the right direction.** It's clear that Republicans have laid the foundation for economic growth. Assembly Republicans will work to ensure that growth continues. Wisconsin should be known for our commitment to prudent budgeting, consistently lowering taxes, support for businesses and a willingness to embrace government reform.

Budgeting for the Future. Assembly Republicans will budget with future generations in mind. We will **balance the biennial budget without a tax increase and continue to grow the rainy day fund.** We've worked hard to reduce our overall tax burden, and we're committed to keeping Wisconsin out of the top ten states for highest tax burden.

We will also be willing to address problems that have been put off for too long. Highways, roads and bridges are essential to everyday life, but because of poor planning past administrations have left us with a significant shortfall. **Assembly Republicans will focus on addressing the transportation fund deficit** so future generations are not burdened with the problem.

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Committed to Keeping Taxes Low. When it comes to income taxes, we will look to reduce rates again and work to provide additional relief to all property owners. If we are to truly build a pathway to the American Dream, future businesses and families need to be assured that the state will remain committed to lowering taxes for everyone.



Limited Government Growth. Since 2011, the overall growth in government expenditures has been about even with statewide personal income growth. Assembly Republicans will maintain this trend – we will strive to hold the growth of government to projected personal income growth. As we've seen in Washington, giving the government more and more taxpayer dollars leads to waste, duplication and unnecessary bureaucracy. There should be a reasonable cap on the amount of revenue the state can raise, and only voters should decide when to lift that cap.

Control Excessive Agency Growth. State employees are important resources in Wisconsin, but each worker adds to the tax burden that is still too high in our state. Last session we cut positions that were unnecessary or vacant. In the next budget, we will find additional positions that can be cut to save more taxpayer resources.

Support for Small Business. The Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP) has been very successful in helping small to medium-sized manufacturers grow and increase efficiency. This program, and other similar programs, should be extended so that more small businesses have access to these resources. The goals of WMEP should also be extended to local governments. From assistance with short and long-term planning, leadership development and staff retention, waste reduction and marketing plans – using a WMEP model would greatly benefit local governments and reduce expenditures.



Property Ready for Business. Assembly Republicans will work with appropriate agencies to ensure that each county across the state has property that is available and pre-approved for businesses considering relocation. Government should do the heavy lifting of securing approvals ahead of time so that businesses can be spared the red tape that sometimes discourages their relocation.



Embracing Government Reform. Assembly Republicans know that the best thing we can do for job creators is unwind some of the damage already done by unnecessary red tape and unaccountable bureaucracy. That's why we will pick up where we left off in our review of administrative rules, but also kick start other initiatives to put checks on bureaucracy and unnecessary government regulation.

- **Renewing our commitment to reviewing every single regulation.** Assembly Republicans began a top to bottom review of the 1,768 chapters of the Administrative Code, looking to eliminate unnecessary or overly-burdensome regulations. The **Right the Rules** project resulted in 100 meetings on 300 chapters with 13 bills that updated or eliminated sections of the code. We will continue our efforts next session and encourage public input.

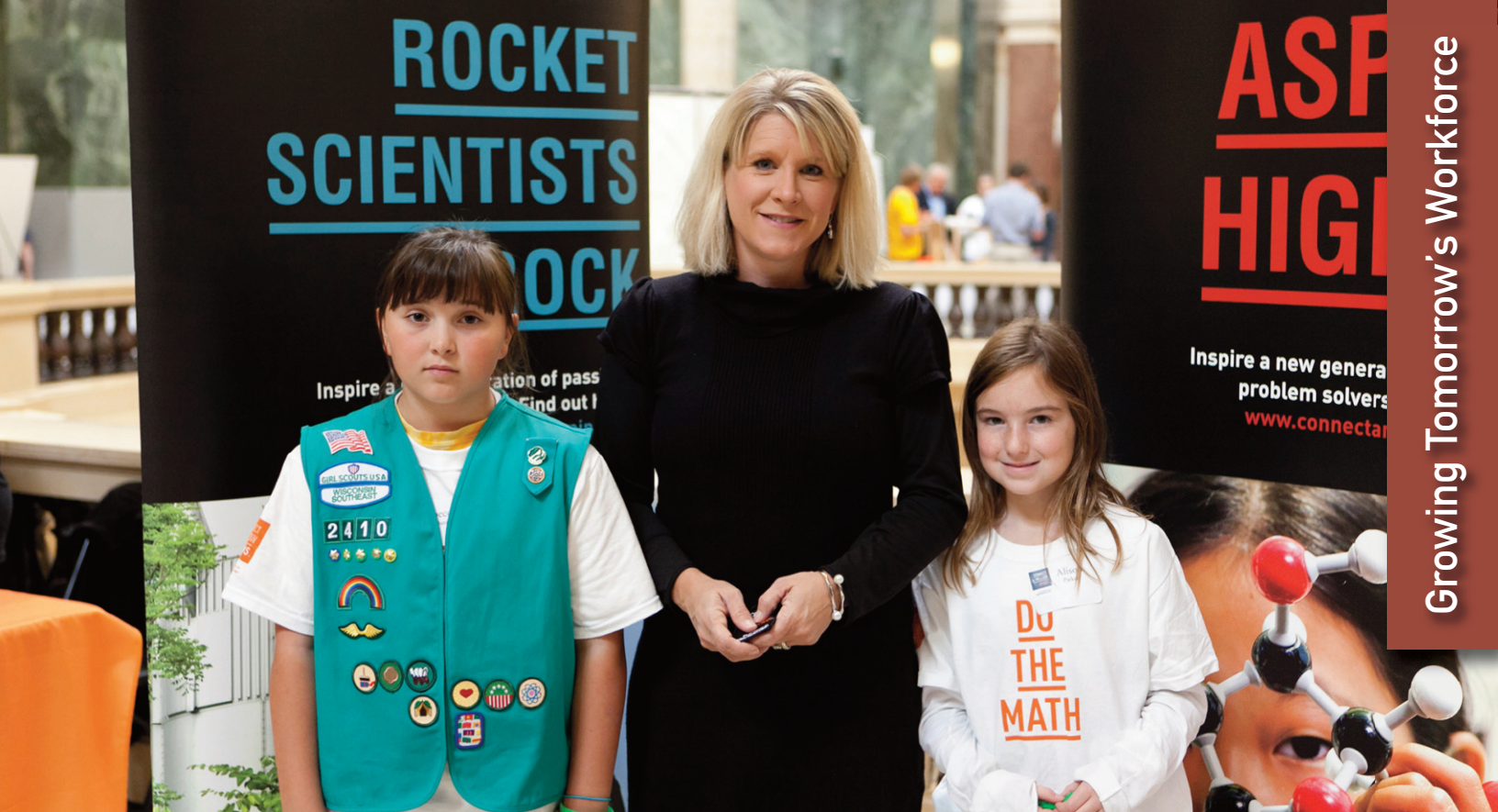


- **Future-Proof Regulations.** To ensure that we never again have the need for a project like Right the Rules, we will push for administrative rules to have an automatic sunset. Meaning, after a certain number of years, each rule must be renewed and undergo the process of legislative oversight and review. Unnecessary or outdated regulations will not survive, resulting in leaner, more efficient government regulations.
- **Course Correction for the GAB.** Since its inception in 2008, the Government Accountability Board has been riddled with criticisms about overreaching and inconsistent standards, and not just from political insiders. In fact, federal courts have found that the GAB has gone beyond its legal authority and has infringed on citizens' rights to free speech. While the need for oversight of elections and ethics is obvious, the GAB, in its current form, is not the answer. We will work to make the necessary reforms to protect the constitutional rights of all citizens to participate in the political process.
- **Fresh Perspective on State Programming.** We believe it is time to explore fresh methods of developing policy that will lead to lower costs and better outcomes. The Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative (Results First) will help



create a model to apply a cost-benefit analysis approach when investing in policies and programs. Results First has been effective in more than 14 states, such as Iowa, New Mexico and Washington. With support from Results First, the Legislature could customize an analytic model when considering new legislation. Results First will also help analyze current programming within agencies. The Department of Corrections is presently working with Results First staff to expand its use of evidence-based practices and identify programs that truly reduce recidivism.

- **Focus on Energy Reform.** An energy savings initiative will aim to reform the Focus program to utilize funds in a more accessible way for businesses and homeowners through a revolving loan fund for performance contract based projects. New programming will increase economic growth and energy savings through more participation.
- **Performance Contracting for Energy Efficient Projects.** Building on the success of performance contracting options for school districts, we will push to allow other governmental units to take advantage of energy-savings projects for facilities upgrades to bring about long-term savings. Additionally, improved oversight measures and higher standards for performance contractors will safeguard the investment of taxpayer dollars.



Improving education and increasing opportunities

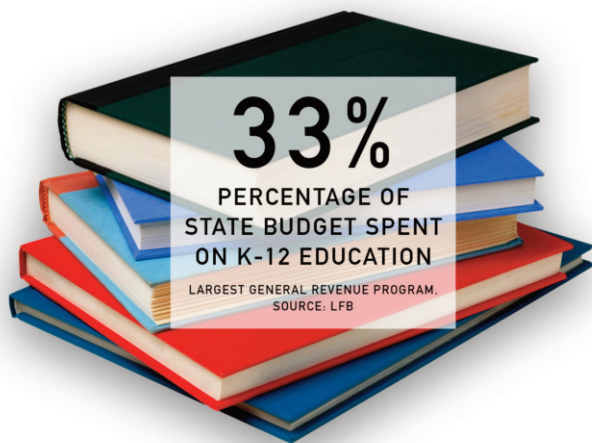
A better Wisconsin begins in the classroom—excellence in public education is among the highest priorities for building a Wisconsin where a strong economy and the American Dream are a reality. We will continue to invest in our schools, make reforms when necessary, and require accountability in all schools that receive public funding. Through legislation, we will encourage school districts to **keep a majority of their operating expenditures in the classroom**, where the investment has a direct impact on student outcomes. We will also **promote financial literacy and life skills** for high school students as they transition into college, the workplace, and homeownership. Assembly Republicans will continue to support responsible legislation that improves outcomes for K-12 students, improves pathways to higher education opportunities, and delivers homegrown talent to Wisconsin businesses.

- **Financial Literacy and Life Skills Courses.** There is a growing concern that many high school graduates are entering the next chapter in life without the requisite skills and knowledge to live on their own, manage personal finances, and handle life's day to day challenges. Basic knowledge in these areas can help to save thousands of dollars and keep money in the pockets of young people in Wisconsin. Through pilot programs, we will begin to grow programming for financial literacy and basic life skills to put our next class of students on the right track.
- **Free General Education Diploma (GED).** Increasing the accessibility of high school completion options is a key piece in the pursuit of self-sufficiency for many. Currently, free GED courses are available to students; however, GED exam costs are rising. Providing funding for free GED testing removes one more barrier standing between non-traditional students achieving a first step toward their goals.

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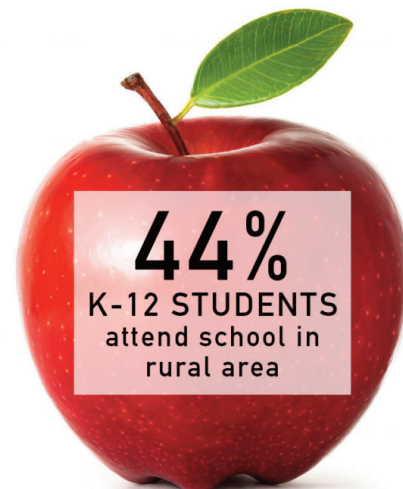
- Increase Worker Training Programs.** Assembly Republicans have supported worker training measures that have provided education to match the specific needs of Wisconsin employers. We will find ways to increase programs such as Wisconsin's Fast Forward initiative, apprenticeship programming and the adaptability of our technical colleges to meet the needs of high demand positions.
- Expand Public School Open Enrollment and School Choice Reform.** Whether a public or private education is preferred by a K-12 parent in Wisconsin, the most important component of the system is making sure there is a choice. Parents and students across the state have different goals and expectations for what a quality educational path needs to be. Choosing a school is a personal decision and we will put the control in parents' hands, not state bureaucracy.



Assembly Republicans will join the goals of high quality K-12 education and responsibility to taxpayers through **true school accountability**. These schools are expected to meet high academic standards that are generated in Wisconsin, not at the federal level. This session, we will work on the **creation of Wisconsin-based academic standards**. We will also follow through on the recommendations of the Rural Schools Task Force and craft legislation to address the unique challenges faced by our rural schools.

- Accountability for All Schools Receiving Tax Dollars.** Last session, the Legislature took the first step toward providing meaningful school accountability for our students and taxpayers. Incentivizing excellence in growth and performance, while taking corrective measures against failing schools is the course toward bringing all schools above the line for K-12 students in Wisconsin.

- Wisconsin-based Model Academic Standards.** Wisconsin schools are better with Wisconsin-based academic standards. We will support the creation of state-based model standards and the continued system of local control over schools.
- Support for Rural Schools.** The Speaker's Task Force on Rural Schools marked an important step forward in bringing to light challenges that are unique to smaller, rural schools. Through the work of the Task Force, we reached out to teachers, principals and parents to develop ideas with informed, practical and achievable solutions. We will move forward with the options that will make the most comprehensive and meaningful impact for rural schools, including increasing access to important classes through a state-funded digital learning program.



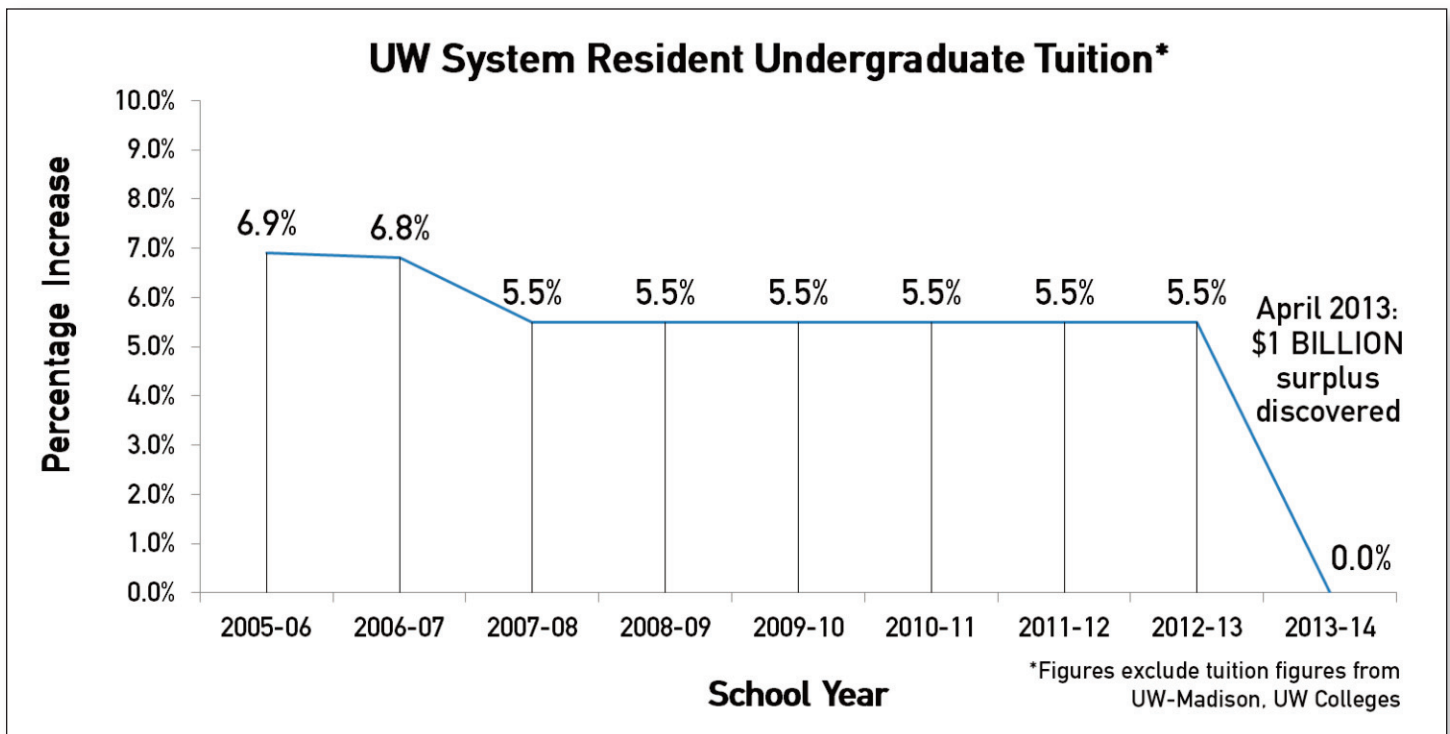
A priority will also be placed on **preparing Wisconsin students for success**. We will ask our public institutions to address the skills gap for Wisconsin employers, target economic trends, and most importantly, **keep the cost of education affordable**.

- Affordable Higher Education Opportunities.**
 Assembly Republicans will support the extension of the state system tuition freeze for in-state undergraduates in the upcoming budget. We will also ask for a systematic review of courses offered in order to identify possible inefficiencies that make it more difficult for students to enroll in required courses. Advancing these initiatives, among others, will help keep student loan debt down and provide better planning for students in order to make four-year undergraduate completion a standard.
- Reform UW System schools to be responsive to Wisconsin job markets and economic needs.**
 Assembly Republicans will demand efficiency and financial transparency from state schools. Resources should be focused on major study areas that are identified as needs for today's economy and for the future of Wisconsin.

Reforming and improving education through fiscally responsible methods is the path forward for Wisconsin students, taxpayers and the growth of the state's economy.



Assembly Republican Agenda





Creating stronger families and safer neighborhoods

Protecting children and families is always a top priority for Assembly Republicans. Our children are our future teachers, doctors, and caregivers and we will work to ensure that parents have the tools they need to provide safe and healthy homes.

- **Investment in Children's Early Years.** Data continues to emphasize the importance of our children's first days, months and years. The Legislative Steering Committee for Supporting Healthy Early Brain Development has heard from many experts from Wisconsin and around the country on how best to apply these lessons into state policy. Assembly Republicans will work alongside the Department of Children and Families and First Lady Tonette Walker to emphasize trauma-informed care – recognizing that physical and psychological trauma affects people's well-being.
- **Child Support Reform.** Every child deserves access to basic resources, but if their non-custodial parent lacks reported income, there is no guarantee that a judge will award even a base amount of child support. This is simply unfair and needs to change. We will work to ensure that those children most in need are awarded a minimum amount of support, and we will crack down on those who use cash to avoid reporting income.
- **Exploring Treatment Options.** Assembly Republicans will explore treatment options for persons with heroin and/or opioid addiction. Options to explore will include in-patient, out-patient, detoxification monitoring, counseling, and self-help groups. Consideration will be taken regarding accessibility for all individuals in need of treatment, including youth and pregnant woman.

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We must also take care of our seniors and fight for our veterans. They protected us and made this country into the greatest place to live, work and raise a family – now we must be there for them.

- **Proven, Innovative Solutions for Seniors.** We will maintain our commitment to fully fund SeniorCare, and promote statewide, community-based caregiver support and training whenever necessary.
- **Tackling Dementia.** More than 120,000 Wisconsin residents suffer from dementia. But we know that the disease affects so many more – for friends, families and caregivers, the situation often seems bleak. Working with the Department of Health Services, Assembly Republicans will put a greater emphasis on fighting dementia, particularly Alzheimer’s, in the Badger State.
- **Fighting for our Veterans.** There is no way to adequately measure the sacrifice veterans have made for our country and state, but we must at least make good on our promise to take care of them when they need us. That’s why Assembly Republicans will make it a priority to protect the Veterans Trust Fund and provide our soldiers with the care they deserve.

It’s also important to create safer neighborhoods. We will always fight to keep dangerous criminals behind bars and ensure tough punishment for those who truly deserve it. At the same time, we will work to give a **second chance for people who truly want to turn their lives around**, and provide **treatment alternatives for those who need help.**

Renewing Priorities on Mental Health. Building on what we learned this session during the Task Force on Mental Health, we will continue to promote understanding and provide resources for those affected by mental illness. Mental illness touches nearly every family in the state, and it is vital for policymakers to continue moving forward on this issue. Next session, Assembly Republicans will begin where we left off and introduce legislation to create a Treatment Alternative and Diversion program for certain offenders with mental illness. We will also investigate options to fight the stigma that prevents many people from seeking the help that they need.



Encourage Tax Fairness. Republicans have taken important steps to reduce the overall income tax burden that all Wisconsin residents pay. We’ve lowered every tax bracket, most significantly the lowest income brackets. However, some married couples still pay more in income taxes when filing jointly than they would if they filed individually. Legislature will consider options to correct this inequality. We will also look to address other state-run programs that create a marriage penalty.



Assembly Republican Agenda



Promoting self-sufficiency and fighting fraud

To help provide a pathway to the American Dream, Assembly Republicans will be wise stewards of taxpayer benefits to **ensure that they exist to help those really in need**. Programs that assist individuals, like FoodShare and BadgerCare, as well as aids to organizations, account for **nearly a quarter** of the state's current two-year budget. We must make sure that these benefits discourage dependency and fraudulent use while maintaining the flexibility to meet individual needs.

Next session, Assembly Republicans **will continue our work to ensure that all public assistance benefits are being used in the way they were intended**. Some ideas include:

- Encouraging all public benefit programs to be administered through an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card system. Cards should be programmed to automatically decline at places like casinos, liquor stores or strip clubs.
- Placing a photo ID on all EBT cards to help increase program integrity.
- Putting a reasonable limit on the number of replacement cards someone can receive.
- Screening individuals receiving public benefits for possible substance abuse problems. Discontinuing benefits upon a positive test and providing resources for treatment and counseling when necessary.
- Sending all public assistance recipients an annual statement of benefits; a tangible and streamlined way of knowing how much help they received and from which programs.

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- Updating the W2 payment schedule to ensure that all payments reflect completed work, rather than the current system of providing a participation stipend up front.
- Ensuring that if someone receives assistance to purchase food, a significant portion of that food is nutritious.

FRAUD PREVENTION
\$8.95 Million
SAVED
 in future benefits
SOURCE: DHS

WISCONSIN QUEST
 5077 0800 1234 5678
 MARY SMITH

Further, fraud is certainly not limited to recipients of public assistance. While the Legislative Fiscal Bureau does not currently estimate the amount of **revenue lost to tax fraud or noncompliance**, we know that even marginal losses impact the government's ability to provide necessary services.

To keep Wisconsin moving forward, the Legislature should do more to raise awareness of noncompliance and look for innovative solutions to make investigations and enforcement more effective. **We will work to increase the amount of money recovered from fraudulent tax activity.**

To help Wisconsinites live the American Dream, **government programs and incentives should serve to motivate self-sufficiency.** Unfortunately, bureaucracy often does the opposite. To move Wisconsin forward, Assembly Republicans propose the following:

- **Review Regulatory Licensing Requirements.** Licensing requirements such as fees, tests and certifications often serve a legitimate public safety purpose. Consumers want to be confident their doctor is aware of the latest information and has the knowledge and ability to adequately address their health concerns. However, some licensing requirements simply create more red tape, discourage people from committing to a particular field, and are an attempt by current license holders to curb



competition. The Legislature should implement an ongoing process to examine all occupational licensing requirements. If requirements are found to be unnecessarily burdensome, they should be revised. Consideration should be given to fields where workers are in high demand and to requirements that often keep low-income workers from entering the workforce.

- **Self-Employment Training Program.** Assembly Republicans recognize that some unemployed workers would benefit from more opportunity to harness their creative and entrepreneurial skills. Wisconsin should join other states in providing training and support for unemployed workers who can demonstrate a viable self-employment business plan. Unemployed workers that qualify for training and support would be exempt, for a time, from completing required work searches. By allowing time to focus on getting a business up and running, we would be potentially creating jobs and would certainly be promoting the kind of creativity that makes America great.
- **More Effective Work Searches.** Assembly Republicans are proud that our state unemployment rate continues to drop as workers are finding jobs that fit their skills and interests. However, the fact remains that for some, a long duration of unemployment leads to discouragement and financial hardship. We will look to make required work searches more meaningful by asking certain unemployed workers, after a time, to seek and accept temporary work.

- **A Path to Employment.** Securing employment before leaving incarceration can play a huge part in determining whether or not a person will re-enter the system. However, finding a job can be tremendously difficult for someone with a criminal record. In order to help move people to a place of self-sufficiency, Assembly Republicans will consider creating a program to help secure temporary employment for inmates before release. We believe that doing so will help increase their chance of securing full-time employment while decreasing their risk of re-entering the system.



Between
60-75%
ex-offenders are jobless
up to a year after release.

- **More Work Options for Juvenile Offenders.** If we truly want to reduce recidivism rates, we need to give young offenders additional opportunities. Current programming provides a chance for offenders to earn their GED and learn personal responsibility, but perhaps the best thing for them is to learn the value of an honest week's work. That's why Assembly Republicans will push for optional work experiences for young offenders, giving them a chance to earn real money working a full-time job.
- **Incentivize Personal Generosity.** Assembly Republicans know and recognize that individuals and non-profit organizations do far more than government to help people experience the American Dream. In order to encourage more support of non-profit organizations that help the needy, Assembly Republicans will work to allow all taxpayers to deduct their charitable contributions, whether they itemize or not. We will also consider allowing individuals to deduct up to 100 certified hours of volunteer work.



Assembly Republican are proposing these reforms to not only promote independence and encourage employment, but also to crack down on abuse of government programs so they can be better utilized by people who need them the most. We believe these reforms will help Wisconsinites who want to work find a job and continue down the pathway to the American Dream.

Assembly Republican Agenda



Responding to changing technology

The world is changing faster each day, and government is usually too slow to react. Assembly Republicans will work to keep up with **technological advancement in the information age**. Whether it's clearing the regulatory path for new **transportation innovations**, supporting the **modernization of the dairy industry** or making **more state information accessible online**, we will ensure that Wisconsin is ahead of the curve.

- **Smart State Resources.** We will work to make citizens' interactions with government quicker and more efficient by supporting apps and mobile-friendly websites for all state agencies. Our goal is to have the easiest access to services of any state in the country.
- **Making Your Voice Heard.** We will continue to have the latest technology on the new legislative website allowing users to monitor proposals, votes and contact their representatives like never before. Communicating with friends and family is easier than ever – so should catching up with your legislator.
- **Transportation for the 21st Century.** Ridesharing apps. Hybrid vehicles. Driverless cars. All of these are changing the dynamics of transportation in our society, and Assembly Republicans are prepared to make changes necessary to ensure the state adapts to these innovations. We will explore enabling legislation for advances like app-based ridesharing and driverless cars, and push ideas for stabilizing the transportation fund to meet our state's future needs.

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As we are all too aware, however, new technology also brings new threats to Wisconsinites. In 2012, seven percent of people over the age of 15 experienced identity theft. For these victims, the damage can last a lifetime. From stolen credit to other invasions of personal privacy, we will continue to do our part to **protect citizens' privacy and promote cyber security.**



7%
over the age of 15
experienced
IDENTITY THEFT
(2012)

- **Prohibit Unauthorized Location Tracking.** The Global Positioning System has improved the ease at which we travel, making even the most remote destinations seem reachable. But technology also poses a serious threat to personal privacy, as devices for tracking vehicles can be purchased online for just a few hundred dollars. This is a grave concern for victims of stalking or abuse. We will renew our efforts to protect people in our state from this invasion of privacy.
- **Cell Phone Kill Switches.** For many, cell phones are what keep everything together. They store contacts, texts, credit card info, photos and other sensitive information. But what happens if the phone is lost or stolen, and that data is available to the wrong people? It could be the worst security breach an individual may face in a lifetime. That's why Assembly Republicans will work with the telecommunications providers in Wisconsin to bring kill switches to consumers' phones. In the event that a phone is lost or stolen, the kill switch will enable the phone's rightful owner to remotely disable it and clear its sensitive information.



Finally, we recognize that while a lot of attention is paid to telecommunications in the information age, we must not neglect the simple aspects of life: like **protecting our natural environment and helping the farmers** who put dinner on our tables every night.

- **Supporting the Modernization of the Dairy Industry.** We will come together to explore ways to support modernization in agriculture and embrace advances in technology to attract new investments in farming and dairy production.
- **Maintain Stewardship Funding.** Not only is protecting our environment the right thing to do, it is also vital to our economy. Tourism sustains roughly 185,000 jobs in Wisconsin, or 7.8% of total employment in our state. People flock to our state to enjoy our pristine waterways and hike our beautiful forests – these are resources that we will protect by maintaining stewardship funding.

Assembly
Republican
Agenda



Building a
Better *Wisconsin*

Stronger Economy • Better Quality of Life

Tomorrow's Workforce

FORWARD

Pathway to the

American Dream

Preparing for the Future

Assembly Republican Agenda

Building Upon a Conservative Foundation

Prosperous *Wisconsin*

The Assembly Republican Forward Agenda is **our commitment to the hard-working citizens of Wisconsin**. We will tackle the tough issues to build a better Wisconsin. We've done it before and will do it again.

In the 102nd Wisconsin State Assembly, we will **build upon the conservative foundation** that Republicans set during the past four years. We must swing open the door of opportunity so **every Wisconsin family can achieve the American Dream**. The Forward Agenda is the right plan to ensure a more prosperous Wisconsin for generations to come.

Share your ideas at www.WisconsinAssemblyRepublicans.com.