

The Sargent Voice

Representative Melissa Sargent

48th Assembly District

Issue 21

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Today, we honor our nation's Veteran's. The men and women who have served our nation deserve our respect and admiration for defending our country at home and abroad.

However, as our service members return to their families, many are discovering a new battlefield as they leave their life of public service and search for civilian employment opportunities and deal with other struggles. We must ensure that our Veteran's are receiving employment assistance and guidance. We must also not ignore the mental issues that face combat veterans who deal with issues such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Easily accessible mental health care must be provided for our soldiers upon returning home.

Our government, both state and federal, has a sacred obligation to our service members. If we put troops in harm's way, we have to take care of them when they come home.

To Veterans all across our state, I thank you and honor your service.

Sincerely,

Melissa

Voter ID bill up on Thursday

The federal court in Milwaukee is currently hearing arguments on Wisconsin Act 23, the voter ID bill that's been tied up in court since a Dane County judge issued an injunction against it in July of last year.

However, that has not stopped legislative Republicans from attempting to pursue similar laws moving forward; even before finding out if they are legal to begin with. AB493 would put in place strict Voter ID requirements.

These laws disproportionately affect elderly, minority and low-income groups. One such example is 95-year-old Florence Hessing of Bayfield. Florence had voted in every election without any problems until voter ID was enacted. However, her driver's license expired when she stopped driving at the age of 90 due to vision problem. Because she was likely born via midwife, she didn't have a birth certificate required to get a new photo ID. Lawyers were eventually able to find an exemption for Hessing that will ultimately allow her to vote, but thousands of other Wisconsinites might not be as lucky.

Despite arguments from proponents of Voter ID laws, there is very little evidence of widespread voter fraud. An analysis by News21, a national investigative reporting project, identified 10 voter

impersonation cases out of 2,068 alleged election fraud cases since 2000 – or one out of every 15 million prospective voters.

We should be encouraging participation in our democracy, not putting up unnecessary and unfair barriers to a persons access to the ballot box.

Should AB 493 come to the Assembly floor, I will be a strong 'no' vote.

Women in Government State Briefing

I was thrilled to host a state briefing by Women in Government, a national, non-profit, non-partisan organization of women state legislators providing leadership opportunities, networking, and educational resources to address and resolve complex public policy.

The Wisconsin State Briefing featured an introduction to Women in Government followed by a presentation on helping families overcome the economic, social, and policy barriers to achieving financial stability.

Ken Taylor, the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families gave a wonderful presentation on families struggling with short term loan rates, home loan protection, mortgage issues, and increasing taxes struggle to make ends meet.

Wisconsin ranks 17 out of 50 among states in the percentage of working families with household incomes below 200% of poverty, according to a new report by the Working Poor Families Project.

By linking female state legislators with resources on these issues, Women in Government hopes to stimulate legislative interest and encourage policymakers to support and promote economic opportunities for families.

This topic is an important one across the country as policy makers seek to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families

Immigration Reform Must Happen Now

America has a broken immigration system. Both Democrats and Republicans agree on this fact. For too long this issue has been left unaddressed while millions of immigrants face uncertain futures.

According to a recent poll, 80% of Americans today support immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship.

They understand that our current immigration laws are no longer working, and that tearing apart families through deportation is not the way to deal with the 11 million undocumented immigrants living in our country.

We know that healthy communities are built on diversity. Creating opportunities for our children is a driving factor in implementing a fair, open immigration system that brings people out of the

shadows and safely into our neighborhoods. Instead of focusing on a punitive system, we must find common sense solutions to protect human rights and the diversity of our communities.

Much of the heavy lifting on this controversial issue is done. This past June, the U.S. Senate passed a bipartisan bill which would set out a 13-year path to citizenship for the millions of immigrants, who are in the United States illegally. This bill may not be perfect, but it is a foundation to build comprehensive final legislation. That's because it successfully balances many different, seemingly competing interests.

It provides a pathway to citizenship to those who work hard, play by the rules and have the goal and track record of making a better life for themselves and their families. That means provisional immigrant status for those who meet certain benchmarks, like having lived in the country since 2011 with no felony convictions and paying fees and fines. And to prevent the breakup of families, the bill lifts the limit on legal permanent residents sponsoring spouses and children.

It also focuses on genuine threats to our national security, and violence on our borders - providing safeguards for victims and targeting the most serious and dangerous criminals. This is a step in the right direction, and a move away from targeting the individuals and families who live in, and bring value to our communities.

Finally, the Senate bill contains a number of provisions strongly supported by the higher education community, including a DREAM Act for students. These provisions offer thousands of undocumented students, who graduate from our high schools every year, an expedited path to citizenship for accomplishing academic pursuits or military service. It also helps to serve our long-term economic growth by providing these young people a path into our workforce.

Recently I joined with 45 of my Republican and Democratic legislative colleagues in Wisconsin to call on our Congressional delegation to work together and support comprehensive immigration reform that is both tough and fair. People all over Wisconsin, throughout the country and across the political spectrum believe this issue deserves a resolution by the federal government - and that the Senate compromise is the best opportunity in a generation to accomplish this goal.

It is my sincere hope that the U.S. House of Representatives follows the Senate's lead and passes a version of this bill. Immigration reform will be good for our economy, good for our families and good for our communities. And it is the right thing to do to build upon past generations of immigrants, which is important for our state and our country. The pursuit of this dream to provide a better, safer, more prosperous life for their families now; and for generations to come must be achieved.

We must respect and protect families while providing opportunities for our "DREAMers". This moves us away from ineffective and unjust laws of the past. Congress must stop stalling and get to work. Let's not wait, let's get this done and let's do it in a bipartisan fashion.

Social Media Bill Update

Last week my Social Media Protection Bill passed the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor unanimously, and is scheduled to be voted on by the full Senate tomorrow (Tuesday, November 12th). The bill would prohibit employers, universities, or landlords from requesting or requiring the social media passwords of their employees, students, or tenants.

This is a common sense measure that protects our Constitutionally protected right to a reasonable expectation of privacy.

No one should be able to invade your Facebook account which can contain sensitive, personal information. Just as we cannot open someone else's mail or email, this is the next logical step in a progression of laws that ensure others cannot intrude on your personal sphere.

It is my hope that both the Senate and Assembly will vote on this bill this week and it will be sent to the Governor's desk for his signature soon!

Make Room For Youth film wins National Award

The locally produced film "Make Room For Youth" has received the 2013 Best Targeted Campaign Award from the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY). The film features Madison area homeless youth and local service providers like Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin.

Named after the Madison grassroots group, Make Room For Youth, or MRFY, the film draws attention to the growing problem of youth homelessness in our area. MRFY is a coalition of service providers, local leaders, and volunteers who came together to advocate for the needs of runaway and homeless youth.

The film features youth from Dane County who share their experiences about being homeless. Tyler Schueffner, Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin's Street Outreach Program Coordinator, provides narration on the state of homeless youth in our area. The film was produced with the volunteer services of Will Nimmow from the Madison Media Institute.

The film provides an insightful window into the lives of our homeless youth. Adding the human voice to an often unseen population is sure to bring additional and necessary conversations to address this tragedy in our community.

Stat of the Week

A modest boost in SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to strengthen the economy and ease hardship expires at the end of October. Starting on November 1st, Wisconsin will see a reduction of \$89 million in SNAP benefits.

Statewide, 452,000 children, or one out of three Wisconsin children, were enrolled in or participated in SNAP in 2012.

Not only should we be ensuring that these Wisconsinites have enough food to put on the table, we must do everything we can to give them pathways out of poverty and into the middle class.

In the Capitol

Bills of interest:

A resolution that I authored will be up in the state legislature this week.

AJR 72 proclaims November as Runaway Prevention Month.

Each year in the United States one in seven young people between the ages of 10 and 18 will run away. In addition, youths between the ages of 12 to 17 are more at risk of homelessness than adults.

Youths who run away from home most often have been expelled from their homes by their families, due to problems in the home, including physical and sexual abuse, mental health disorders of a family member, substance abuse and addiction of a family member, and parental neglect; and in some cases, youth are asked to leave the home because the family is unable to provide for their specific mental health or disability needs.

This resolution brings awareness to this growing issue, and honors those in organizations and programs which help these children.

We must continue working together to identify resources to help homeless and runaway youth develop the skills necessary to succeed.

Alternate Side Parking

Alternate Side Parking Rules Start Thursday Evening

The City of Madison's alternate side parking restrictions will begin at 1 a.m. on Friday November 15th. That means that City of Madison residents must park their cars on the odd house numbered side of the street Thursday evening November 14th.

The alternate side parking rules are in effect from November 15th until March 15th, regardless of weather conditions.

The alternate side parking rules are in effect seven days a week from 1 a.m. until 7 a.m. for most of the City of Madison. Alternate side parking restrictions require that Madison residents park on the odd house numbered side of the street between the hours of 1 a.m. and 7 a.m. on odd numbered days and on the even house numbered side of the street between the hours of 1 a.m. and 7 a.m. on even numbered days.

The only area where the rules are not in effect every day is the Downtown/Isthmus Snow Emergency Zone. The Snow Emergency Zone extends from Park and Proudfit Streets on the south and west to Thorton Avenue and the Yahara River on the north and from Lake Mendota to Lake Monona. In this area, alternate side parking rules are only in effect during a declared snow emergency.

Violations of the alternate side parking ordinance are punishable by fines of \$20. The fine increases to \$60 during a Snow Emergency.

Quote of the Week

"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men"

-Frederick Douglas

We must heed these words and continue to provide fully funded, quality public education so that our future generations remain strong and resourceful.

Flu Tips

Don't Let the Flu Ruin your Thanksgiving Holiday

Now is the Right Time to Get the Flu Vaccine

While the flu hasn't yet hit Wisconsin hard, we shouldn't be lulled into the feeling that we have plenty of time before we need to get a flu shot. Here's a reason to get your flu shot now: the flu shot takes 2 weeks to start working. You also need to get your flu shot now to help prevent sharing the influenza virus at Thanksgiving. So getting the vaccine just a week before Thanksgiving is not going to protect you or your loved ones from a particularly ill-timed sneak attack by the influenza virus.

At Thanksgiving you will be around more people, with visits to family and friends, parties and turkey dinners. Visiting mom, grandma and that new baby can make for memorable holiday moments, as long as you don't bring the flu virus along to spoil the party.

So please don't procrastinate. The best time to protect yourself and your family against the flu is actually right now. The CDC recommends EVERY person over age 6 months get an annual flu shot.

Flu shots are readily available through local clinics, as well as some pharmacies and stores. Free vaccinations are available from Public Health for children and adults without health insurance and children with BadgerCare.

In the District

Positive Options Program at the East Side Community Center

POP is a Friday night alcohol and drug abuse prevention program that combines education about substance abuse prevention with wellness and recreational activities. Children and youth enjoy a homecooked meal, followed by an educational segment on a variety of AODA/health/developmental issues (drugs, tobacco, alcohol, peer pressure, positive choice making, wellness) and then the recreational "positive option" activity (skating, basketball, theatre excursions, field trips, rock climbing, etc.).

Call (608)249-0861 or or email Info@EastMadisonCC.org for more information and times.

Playtime productions - Ali Baba & a Few Thieves

November 23

1p.m.

Warner Park Community Center

\$1 suggested donation

Playtime Productions is Community Theater by children for children

For more information: (608) 437-4217

Poor Jobs Numbers

- Wisconsin ranks 37th in the nation in job growth:
Bureau of Labor Statistics – Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q1 2011-2013
- Wisconsin ranks 29th in the nation in monthly job growth over the past year:
Bureau of Labor Statistics – Current Employment Statistics survey, August 2012-2013
- Wisconsin ranks 50th - dead last - in short-term job growth:
U.S. Chamber of Commerce “Enterprising States” Study, April 2013
- Wisconsin ranks 41nd as best state for business:
Forbes Magazine’s Annual “Best States for Business” rankings, September 2013
- Wisconsin will be 45th in job growth through 2016:
Forbes Magazine’s Annual “Best States for Business” rankings, September 2013