



John Nygren

WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 89TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

June 20, 2013

Minority Leader Peter Barca
Room 201 West
Madison, Wisconsin

Minority Leader Barca,

Yesterday, you insinuated that Assembly members who were absent from the vote “had some explaining to do.” You went as far as to imply they were “ducking a vote.” While I can’t speak to Rep. Pridemore’s absence, I would like to defend my colleague Tom Larson. Tom is recovering from surgery he had earlier this month to remove a tumor and kidney. Doctors advised him not to travel and he heeded their advice. The reason for his absence was announced on the floor prior to debate. I’m hopeful that you missed that announcement and were not pandering to the press at the expense of Tom Larson. I also hope you realize your comments are somewhat inappropriate and insensitive.

Tom has not “ducked” tough votes in the past, including his aye vote on Act 10, and I can assure you he would have been down in Madison to cast his vote if he was physically able. At the press conference you told the press corps they should question the legislator’s absences. If anything, I think they should question your motives and apparent lack of empathy.

Instead of analyzing and obsessing over how each Republican legislator voted on the budget, I would suggest you turn your attention to how your members will be impacted by voting against it, especially since they didn’t offer any amendments to change it. I encourage you to take a step back and think how they will explain voting against a budget that provides an income tax reduction of over \$650 million (one of the largest in state history), holds the line on property taxes, continues to fully fund state transportation projects without delay, sends more state resources to our public schools, helps grow Wisconsin agriculture, and provides an increase in funding for local governments.

Finally, I look forward to discussing the 200+ amendments your members drafted, but did not put forth, during the budget debate. My inclination is that your amendments would have dramatically increased spending based on motions offered by Democratic members of Joint Finance. My belief is that you realized that the amount of spending in your amendments would be more than the citizens of Wisconsin could afford.

Sincerely,

John Nygren
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance
89th Assembly District