



E-mail Update

April 17, 2015

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Dear Friends,

This week, the budget-writing Joint Committee on Finance, which I co-chair, began our work on the 2015-2017 budget proposed by Governor Walker. After only two days, we've made real progress and improvements on the budget.

On Friday, we added a provision to help veterans improve their skills in Wisconsin's technical colleges. We also are getting some good news in one of our most important portions of the budget. Transportation is the backbone of our economy. We are happy to report the transportation fund is \$72 million higher than estimated by Governor Walker's budget plan. With the many needs in the state, the improved forecast will help ease some of the challenges we are facing in investing in our infrastructure.

As always, if you have any ideas on how to improve our great state, please do not hesitate to contact me at Sen.Darling@legis.wi.gov or at 608-266-5830.

Sincerely,

Alberta Darling

Links





Senator Darling's
Website

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JFC Begins Work on State Budget



Now that public hearings are finished and executive sessions are underway, we have started to improve on the foundation the governor provided in his budget.

As we examine each section of the budget, our goal is to deliver real reform, protect taxpayers, and provide a stable environment to grow jobs. We will continue to look for ways to make our state more affordable for middle-class taxpayers and make government more efficient.

Additionally, there are 14 non-fiscal policy items included in the governor's proposal that we are removing from the state budget. These items are better suited to go through the regular legislative process.

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle held numerous hearings on the governor's budget and we look forward to using this public input throughout the budget process.

Playground Project

You may have heard about this amazing project to provide a safe and accessible playground at Valley View Elementary School in Menomonee Falls. Organizers are trying to raise the \$38,000 they need to make this goal a reality. You can find out more about the playground project

here: <http://www.scrippsmedia.com/wtmj/shows/wtmj-cares>

Motion Eases Veterans Return to School

Making sure Wisconsin's veterans get the skills they need to transition from the military into the workforce is the goal of a budget motion I offered with State Representative John Nygren (R-Marinette). The motion will help fund and recreate successful services to help veterans navigate Wisconsin's technical colleges. Our goal is to make sure Wisconsin's veterans are able to better transition into the workforce or to four-year colleges.

Veterans face different challenges than most students do when they return to school. We owe it to the brave men and women who protect our freedoms to make sure their education isn't just paid for, but that their experience is a success.

Since Wisconsin's GI bill took effect in 2005, veteran enrollment in the Wisconsin technical college system increased nearly 500%. Between 4,000 and 5,000 veterans enroll annually using state or federal GI bill benefits. Our motion will set aside \$1,000,000 to fund grants at Wisconsin Technical College schools to develop and expand specialized instructional and support services for veterans by replicating what is working on other campuses. As Representative Nygren says the motion is an investment in Wisconsin's workforce.

"Veterans are some of the most sought after employees," Nygren said, "This investment will help increase the number of qualified and skilled veterans for Wisconsin employers to hire."

The budget motion was added to the 2015-2017 budget by a vote of 16-0. The entire budget will also be voted on by the both the full State Senate and full State Assembly before going to Governor Walker's desk for final approval.

Around the 8th...



Two school groups from St. Marcus Lutheran School in Milwaukee visited our beautiful State Capitol this week.



And kids from Stormonth Elementary School in Bayside also visited this week!