



What an exciting time to be a conservative legislator in the great State of Wisconsin! 63 Republican's here in the Assembly are getting ready to move this state forward at a very impressive pace. Even though we are all in 'budget mode' here at the capitol, there are some stand-alone bills that all of us can be very excited about.

The Chief Justice should be chosen by their peers.

First up and out of the box is a constitutional amendment requiring the Chief Justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court be elected by the members of the court. Current law provides that the Chief Justice is simply the longest serving member of the court. I feel very strongly that leadership matters, especially at this level. No better measure of leadership than having the respect and support of the people you serve with.

Prevailing Wage

Another piece of legislation that I'm excited to have cosponsored is a bill to repeal the prevailing wage law. Currently cities, towns, villages and other government entities are required to pay the "prevailing wage" for construction projects over \$48,000 for single trade projects and \$100,000 for multi-trade projects. A couple of things about the program are worth mentioning. First of all, in a time of low job growth, it seems destructive to put artificial price inflators on needed government projects at the local level. Secondly, I believe in market based solutions. Lastly, the method of determining the "prevailing wage" is seriously flawed. The department of workforce development sent out over 18,500 "surveys" to construction contractors and under 2000 came back. Therefore, under 10% of the contractors will set the "prevailing wage" for 2016. I suspect that many projects have been put on hold for financial reasons due to this law.

Right to Work

The Right to Work bill has been in and out of the news on a regular basis. A Right to Work bill (RTW) would allow workers to secure employment without being forced to join a union. I believe it is immoral to force a worker to give a portion of their paycheck and be required to join a group or organization that the individual may not wish to join. Furthermore, unions have spent more than any other entity on political lobbying. It is unethical to force a worker to spend his or her hard earned money promoting political issues that one may find offensive. Having that all said, the real benefit of RTW is the economic expansion associated with the law. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, states that have a RTW law enjoy more job creation, faster job growth, higher disposable income and manufacturing output.

John Doe

We are all disgusted with how Milwaukee district Attorney John Chisolm used Wisconsin's John Doe provision to intimidate, punish and inhibit the activities of conservative activist groups and of course Governor Scott Walker. There will be a complete overhaul of the John Doe process and I will be helping to make sure that these ill-advised partisan witch hunts never happen again in the great State of Wisconsin. Not only is John Doe unconstitutional it is absolutely unconscionable to subject a person or persons to this kind of public scrutiny without the slightest ability to defend oneself.

Budget

Scott Walker has put forward a good budget. The question is whether or not the budget is as good as it can be. Here are my initial thoughts on the budget as we begin the process.

UW SYSTEM

Cutting 300 million dollars from the UW budget (5% of its budget) is a good idea. It is time we put some kind of fiscal restraint on the system. The tuition freeze is also a must, tuition has consistently gone up at a much higher rate than inflation while professors teach less and less. The only thing I object to is giving the board of regents more free reign to make decisions that benefit staff and research firms while the students get left behind.

Bucks Arena

I think the Governor's plan is a great start. The leadership must come from the Governor because it is quite obvious that it will not come from the Mayor's office. I do however feel strongly that the City of Milwaukee must come to the table and bring their checkbook. Milwaukee and its leaders must engage in the process if they are serious about keeping the city relevant as we go forward.

State-Wide School Choice

I am in favor of expanding school choice so that every family has options available to them. No child should be locked in a program that simply is not meeting his or her needs. I also believe very strongly in accountability. The Governor has said that parents not governments make the best choices for their families and I agree whole heartedly. We do not need more tests, more scores and more layers of bureaucracy. We need to give parents information and let them make their choice.

Limiting the 220 Busing Program

The state of Wisconsin provides over 31 million dollars for Milwaukee public schools intra district busing program. The purpose of the program is to bus kids who live on the north side to the south side and for kids who live on the east side to the west side and so on. The Governor's budget will effectively end the program limiting enrollment to students who are already enrolled. The program has been detrimental to neighborhood schools and has gone on way too long.

Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program

Since 2000, this program has borrowed millions to buy land on behalf of the State of Wisconsin. Government (Federal, State and Local) already owns nearly 20% of Wisconsin lands and it is time to end the program. The debt payment for lands already purchased is over 89 million dollars! What a perfect example of how once a government program gets going they develop a life of their own and become painfully difficult to end.