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Setting the Record Straight on the Extraordinary Session

With Governor Walker's recent approval of the Extraordinary Session bills, I wanted to take some time to set the record straight on what all that entailed. You've seen the headlines and you've watched the news stories. From the outside looking in, it's easy to get caught up in the fear mongering rhetoric and sensationalized stories. One of my greatest duties as your state representative is to make sure your voices are heard and that you are well informed about what exactly is going on in our statehouse. I can promise you there are many reasons why the passage of the Extraordinary Session bills was good for Wisconsin and that Governor-elect Tony Evers continues to have some of the strongest powers of any governor in this country.

To begin, I want to squash the idea that these bills are brand new and have never been vetted by the public. Many of the proposals that were introduced in the Extraordinary Session, in fact nearly half, have previously been before the legislature. Many of them were included in the legislature's passage of the 2017-19 state budget or are current administrative rules that are now codified into law. One example is the Health Care Stability Act. Earlier this year, we passed legislation that will help stabilize the private insurance market in order to reduce premiums in the individual marketplace and expand coverage. Thanks to the passage of this plan, many Wisconsinites will see their health insurance premiums drop in 2019. We passed a lot of strong policy over the last 8 years, the Health Care Stability Act included, and it's important that these meaningful initiatives that put Wisconsin where we are today stay intact and are implemented as originally intended.

Secondly, the concept of a "lame-duck" session is not unprecedented. Not too long ago, the Democrats lost not only the executive branch, but both houses of the legislature. In December of 2010, Democrats tried to push through union contracts that were over 1000 pages long and restricted incoming Governor Walker's authority to appoint cabinet secretaries. They even tried to restrict the Governor's veto authority, a power that is very unique to our state. Neither of these concepts were considered during the most recent "lame-duck" session.

Most importantly, this package of legislation does not change the constitutional powers of Governor-elect Evers. Coming into office on January 7th, Evers will retain the same constitutional powers that Walker had over the last eight years. And it's important to remember, Governor-elect Evers will have the strongest veto pen in the country. Unlike other states across our country, our governor's veto power has the ability to change policy. Additionally, Governor-elect Evers will have the power to appoint hundreds of individuals to his cabinet and introduce his own budget every two years.

Now that it is clear that the sky isn't falling, it's time to look forward to the work that needs to be done. I was elected to bring the unique voice of our area to Madison, and listen to what challenges residents in our area are facing. Keeping taxes in line, properly funding our public schools, reducing waste, fraud and abuse, and investing in our workforce are all things most Wisconsinites agree on. By listening to you, and working to find common ground with my legislative colleagues and the governor-elect, I know we can continue to improve our state.

Rep. Mark Born resides in Beaver Dam and represents the 39th District in the Wisconsin State Assembly.

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