



JAMES W. EDMING

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 87TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

A Strong Budget for Wisconsin

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Back in late February Governor Tony Evers unveiled his 2019-21 state budget proposal. Over the following months, my legislative colleagues and I spoke with the people of Wisconsin and gathered their feedback on this 1,000 plus page proposal. Since the budget's introduction, I traveled around the 87th Assembly District holding seven listening sessions across the district, from Hayward down to Athens. In addition, my staff and I reviewed the over 900 responses that were submitted to my spring budget survey, as well as the numerous other contacts to my office. Throughout this process, the citizens of the 87th District shared with me their top priorities for our state's next two-year budget. As the budget process unfolded, I advocated for these priorities and did everything I could to get as many of them addressed in the final budget proposal as possible.

With a piece of legislation the size of the state budget, there is bound to be some parts that everyone does not agree with, myself included. However, I do believe this budget addresses a number of the 87th District's priorities in a fiscally responsible manner, which is why it earned my support.

Here are some of the highlights of the 2019-21 state budget that was passed by the legislature:

- Reduces income taxes for middle class taxpayers by over \$300 million over the course of the two-year budget without increasing taxes on farmers and manufacturers.
- Builds upon the over \$630 million in increased funding for K-12 education from the 2017-19 state budget and increases funding by an additional \$500 million. Over the course of the biennium, schools will see an increase of \$604 per student and special education funding will increase by 22% in the second year of the budget.
- Allocates \$46.2 million for the state's broadband expansion grant program, the most ever invested in this program.
- Provides significant increases in funding for personal care workers (\$37 million), nursing homes (\$30 million), and direct caregivers (\$27 million).
- Provides a 10% increase for local road aids and a 19% increase in funding for the state highway rehabilitation program to maintain our roads and keep projects around the state on schedule. This budget also provides a total of \$5 million in a supplemental



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transportation funding for qualified towns over the course of the two-year budget. This is all accomplished with the lowest level of bonding for roads since 2001.

At the time I am writing this column, Governor Evers is considering action on the spending plan. By the time you read this, Governor Evers may have made his decision on whether to sign the budget or veto it in part or in full. I believe that this budget is a good compromise between a Democrat governor and a Republican-controlled legislature. It is my hope that he signs it into law.

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The 87th Assembly District includes portions of Clark, Marathon, Rusk, Sawyer and Taylor Counties.