

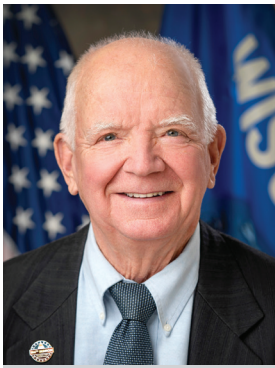
Wisconsin State Representative

JAMES EDMING



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

SPRING 2024



It has been my honor to serve the people of the 87th Assembly District. Thank you for trusting me to be your representative in Madison.

– Rep. James Edming

CONTACT ME

Please sign up for my E-Updates on my website!

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Dear Friends and Neighbors of the 87th Assembly District,

As the 2023-2024 legislative session comes to a close, I would like to thank you, the hardworking people of the 87th Assembly District, for the trust you continue to place in me to be your voice at the State Capitol. Being your state representative is truly the best job I've ever had. Even with a divided government in Madison, the Legislature was able to deliver on a number of important measures for the people of Wisconsin.

As a proud advocate for our veterans and active duty service members, it was a tremendous honor to serve as the chairman of the Assembly Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs this session. The committee did some great work advancing several pieces of important legislation to help our veterans and service members.

In addition, the Legislature as a whole delivered on several priorities for the people of Wisconsin including:

- A historic increase in shared revenue for local governments across Wisconsin, with communities across the 87th District seeing at least a 20% increase. Shared revenue is the primary funding mechanism for county and municipal governments
- Increased funding for transportation by \$1.5 billion, including a \$125 million increase for state highways, \$45 million for local bridges, \$100 million for the Local Road Improvement Program, and \$150 million for the new Agriculture Road Improvement Program
- Provided significant funding increases for public, charter, and choice schools, including over \$1 billion in additional funding for our public schools

Thank you again for allowing me to serve you. If you have any thoughts on this past session or any ideas for next session, feel free to share them with me. Some of the best bill ideas come from constituents just like you.

Sincerely,

James W. Edming
State Representative
87th Assembly District

Wisconsin State Representative

**JAMES
EDMING**



Fighting for Our Veterans

Those who step up to serve our nation in our armed forces and their families make great sacrifices for our state and nation. During my time in the Legislature, I've been proud to be a leader in advocating for veterans. This session I have the incredible honor of serving as chairman of the Assembly's Veterans and Military Affairs Committee. I also took the lead on several veterans initiatives.

One of my top priorities this session has been to expand the eligibility for the disabled veteran and surviving spouse property tax credit. Increasing the eligibility for this credit is one of the primary concerns I've heard from veterans and veterans' organizations not just in the 87th District, but around the state. When our veterans joined our nation's armed forces, they did so knowing that they may give their lives in service to our country. It is only right that we help support those who were significantly injured while serving our country.

Currently, a veteran must have a service-connected disability rating of 100% in order to qualify for the credit. I brought forward legislation lowering that threshold to 70%. By expanding the eligibility for this credit we are providing property tax relief that will allow more of our disabled veterans and their spouses to stay in their homes and out of more costly alternatives such as long-term care facilities. Not only does keeping these folks in their homes save money, but also preserves a higher quality of life. At the time I am writing this update, this proposal has been approved by the Assembly. I hope that by the time this newsletter reaches your mailbox, it will have cleared the Senate and been signed into law by Governor Evers.



Rep. Edming testifies in support of AB 102 which would expand the eligibility for the disabled veteran and surviving spouse property tax credit.



Another bill I authored will remove some unnecessary red tape from the grant program that helps fund our county veteran service offices. Currently, most county veteran service officers (CVSOs) are required to take a civil service exam for their county to be eligible for this grant. However, this exam covers very little of the duties that CVSOs perform. The legislation I brought forward simply eliminates that unnecessary red tape and makes it easier for counties to obtain funding that helps them serve our veterans. It passed the Assembly in January and will hopefully be signed into law by the governor by the time you read this update.

In addition, I was proud to support legislation in the Veterans and Military Affairs Committee to provide increased funding for the University of Wisconsin Missing-in-Action Recovery and Identification Project. This funding would be used to help locate the remains of service members who are missing in action and return them home. We voted this legislation out of committee earlier this session, and I hope it will make it to the governor's desk.

A Big Win for Local Governments

One of this session's greatest accomplishments was the bipartisan shared revenue deal. This program is one of the primary funding mechanisms for county and municipal governments and the funding had not been increased for several years.

Under the reforms passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the governor, every local government in the 87th District will see at least a 20% increase in their shared revenue payments.

Also, to ensure reliable funding for our local governments going forward, the shared revenue deal created a new segregated fund for local governments funded by 20% of the state's sales tax revenue.

In addition to the wins for local governments, the deal contained several conservative reforms including:

- Elimination of the personal property tax
- Requires the DNR to get local support for stewardship projects north of US Highway 8
- Creates a \$300 million, three-year pilot program to encourage local governments to provide better services to taxpayers in a more cost-effective manner

Investing in Education

Another big win for the people of Wisconsin was the deal the Legislature reached with Governor Evers during the state budget process to provide significant funding increases for public, charter, and choice schools. This deal increased the per-pupil payments to choice and charter schools and raised the revenue ceiling for public schools.

In the budget, \$1 billion in new funding was provided for public schools, including a \$325 per pupil increase in each year of the two-year budget. In addition, more funding was allocated for literacy, mental health, and special education. This investment keeps state aid for public K-12 schools at two-thirds funding.

The legislature also passed Act 20, the "Right to Read Act", to help to improve the reading proficiency of Wisconsin's students. As of 2022, 67.4% of Wisconsin's 4th graders failed to test at proficient or above in reading.

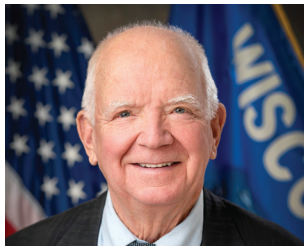
Act 20 creates an Office of Literacy at the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) that will be charged with implementing many of the new requirements, including requiring schools to provide intensive reading intervention for students reading below grade level.

Honoring the 87th District's First Responder of the Year

Back in October, the State Assembly recognized first responders from around the state with the First Responder of the Year Award. I was honored to recognize James "Jim" Onarheim from Sawyer County as the recipient from the 87th Assembly District. Jim has served the community in many ways, including as an Advanced EMT and Assistant Medical Examiner with the Sawyer County Ambulance Service. Jim has worked tirelessly to train and supervise EMS personnel over many years and has done great work with the Hayward Lakes Visitors and Convention Bureau, the Moose Lake Improvement Association, and First Lutheran Church. Jim also works with local organizations such as the Hayward Lions Club to procure AED devices for installation around the county and trains people on how to use them. Sawyer County is blessed to have someone like Jim who gives so much to the community, and it was a privilege to recognize him for his many years of dedicated service.



Jim was joined by his daughter Gretchen, granddaughter Analeise, and co-workers from the Sawyer County Ambulance Service at the ceremony



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One of the best parts of my job is interacting with our future leaders. I enjoy visiting classrooms around the district to teach about state government and meeting with students when they visit the Capitol.