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# JAMES W. EDMING

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 87<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

## Restoring Balance

**December 7, 2018**

As you are likely aware, the state legislature met in extraordinary session this past week to consider legislation relating to a variety of government reforms. I appreciate everyone who reached out to my office to share both their support and opposition to the bills before the legislature. Your feedback helps to inform my decisions on issues that come before me in the legislature. After carefully considering the three proposals that came before the Assembly I did vote in favor of passing them. Let me take a few moments to explain why I did.

First, contrary to what you may have heard in the media, the extraordinary session was not about "limiting" the powers of the incoming governor and attorney general. The real powers of the governor and attorney general are outlined in the Wisconsin State Constitution and can only be changed through a constitutional amendment. What also does not change is that the governor will continue to have the most powerful veto pen in the nation. What the extraordinary session bills do is reassert the role of the legislature and reclaim some of the powers that previous legislatures have delegated to the executive branch. These reforms will help restore the balance of power between two co-equal branches of government. While the new governor and attorney general have the right to pursue different policies than their predecessors, any changes made to the policies that were put into place over the past few years should not be able to be reversed or gutted by unelected agency bureaucrats or through executive orders.

One example of a policy that will be protected by our reforms is our state's Voter ID law. This law was passed by the legislature, signed into law by the governor, and upheld by the courts. While this law has been in effect for several elections now some of the provisions that allow for free ID's to be obtained and for technical college IDs to be used for voting purposes are actually only outlined in the state's administrative code. A part of the legislation that was passed in the extraordinary session puts these provisions into state law which will prevent these policies from being repealed without the consent of the legislature.

In addition, the extraordinary session legislation also protects some of the welfare reforms that have been enacted over the past few years. Many of these reforms required a waiver to be approved by the Federal government. This legislation requires the Department of Health Services to get the approval of the legislature before requesting a new waiver or making any changes to, including the termination of, existing waivers. This change simply ensures that any decisions made to change or create state health policy are made by the legislature and not unelected bureaucrats.

I would like to end by saying that I believe that these reforms are a good idea no matter which party controls the legislature or the governor's and attorney general's offices. Again, I would like to thank everyone who reached out to me to share their thoughts. Whether you and I happen to



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agree on this issue or not, I still appreciate that you took the time to reach out. If you would like to read more detailed information about the legislation that was passed in the extraordinary session I encourage you to read the [synopsis from the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau](#).

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