

LOOKING AHEAD TO A NEW LEGISLATIVE SESSION IN 2013

Bipartisanship is the new buzzword

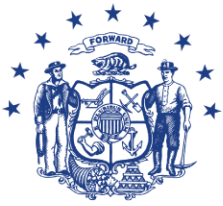
Bipartisanship is the theme for the upcoming legislative session in 2013. In the last election, voters sent the message loud and clear that they are demanding that we work together. Is it possible? Absolutely, if both sides are willing to make the effort. Is it probable? That depends upon whether the Governor, 99 State Representatives, and 33 Senators are willing to set aside partisan differences to focus on areas of common interest to solve the most important problems facing our state. The election is over. It's time to work together.

While the nation as a whole adds jobs every month, Wisconsin is lagging far behind. According to Forbes Magazine, Wisconsin has sunk to 42nd in the country for business climate. They suggest that our "results have been middling at best as job growth is projected to be second worst in the U.S. through 2016." We need to turn that trend around as soon as possible. A focus on job creation needs to be the first priority on every Wisconsin legislator's agenda. In fact, the first bill I will introduce is my jobs bill from last session that passed unanimously at the committee level. This proposal will allow Technical Colleges to use an existing popular grant program to teach business diversification. It will help Wisconsin small businesses compete and expand in a global economy, completing the circle in our efforts to find new jobs for displaced workers. Best of all, it does so without adding a dollar of spending.

Technical Colleges, along with our universities, are at the front line for training workers for jobs that require diverse skill sets to keep up with the changing economy. Last session, with a budget deficit, the state made massive cuts in education at all levels. I'm glad to hear the Governor talk about trying to restore some of the cuts to higher education and our K-12 schools. Strong public education is the start of a trained work force, ensuring that everyone is contributing to a growing economy.

One issue that calls for bipartisan cooperation to create jobs is iron ore mining in northern Wisconsin. A balanced mining bill has the potential to create thousands of jobs while ensuring that the Department of Natural Resources has the ability to protect our environment. I was disappointed that the bipartisan bill that was proposed last session was not even brought up for a vote. A serious problem with the other bill was that it would have voided shoreland zoning ordinances throughout the state. We were warned by FEMA officials that this would result in our entire state being ineligible to participate in the federal flood insurance program. In La Crosse County that would have left over 1000 parcels and homes unsellable because of the lack of flood insurance. I will work to make sure any new proposal addresses this concern.

As a former County Board Chair, I have seen firsthand how decisions made at the state level cost more money for our local governments. One example from last session was a state budget provision that prohibited county highway departments from cooperating with each other and with



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
STEVE DOYLE

WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

94th DISTRICT

municipalities. It raised costs by hundreds of thousands of dollars statewide by forcing counties to buy their own equipment instead of trading services with their neighbors. I co-sponsored a bill last session to repeal this law, but it didn't make it out of committee. I will again be looking at ways for local governments to work together to save tax dollars. After all, tax dollars all come from the same source – your pocket.

There are 14 new Democratic members of the Assembly and 11 new Republican members. All that new blood could help create a different environment in Madison that would lead to more efficiency and bipartisanship. I am looking forward to getting to know these new people who have chosen to give their time to public service and making Wisconsin a great place to live. I feel optimistic that we can focus on job creation and put aside petty bickering. It is what the people who have elected us expect. Now let's get to work.