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# HOWARD MARKLEIN

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STATE SENATOR • 17<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

## **Capitol Update By Senator Howard Marklein February 12, 2016**

### **Working in My Wheelhouse**

Legislators specialize in specific issue areas for a wide variety of reasons. My focus areas include rural issues because I live in and represent one of the largest rural districts in the state; agricultural issues because I have a farming background and serve the most agriculturally-dependent districts in the state; transportation and veterans issues because I serve on the Senate Committee on Transportation & Veterans Affairs committee; and tax, revenue and financial issues because they fall directly into my wheelhouse.

We all have a wheelhouse. In baseball, the wheelhouse is the part of a batter's strike zone most likely to produce a home run. For all of us, our wheelhouse is our area of expertise; the place we perform well; the wealth of our knowledge and experience; the things we know.

In the legislature, each legislator brings a unique set of experiences, professional roles and background to our collective conversation. We rely on each other for input and ideas based on our experiences as we seek to make decisions that will be positive for the people of Wisconsin. As a result, many of us work in our wheelhouse and add this area of specialization to our legislative repertoire.

My wheelhouse is generally based on my professional experience as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) with a focus on taxes. I have the most experience among my colleagues in studying, analyzing and managing finances for individuals and companies throughout our state. This unique perspective allows me to approach tax and finance-related issues with a thorough and thoughtful perspective based on my experiences in the private sector. The questions I ask and the approach I take are directly influenced by my personal history.

Other legislators approach other issue areas in the same way. For example, Representative Todd Novak (R-Dodgeville), who also serves as the Mayor of Dodgeville, is a great resource for local government issues. Senator Leah Vukmir (R-Brookfield) is the Senator we talk to when we have a healthcare-related issue. Her experience, as a Registered Nurse and educator gives her a much deeper knowledge of these issues. Likewise, Sen. Tom Tiffany (R-Hazelhurst) is our go-to Senator for natural resources issues because of his involvement in these issues in northern Wisconsin. Sen. Rick Gudex (R-Fond du Lac) has been a tremendous resource as we discuss issues related to manufacturing because of his position at Brenner Tank LLC for the past 24 years.

Unfortunately, compared to many of my legislative colleagues, my wheelhouse is really boring to most people. Tax laws are tedious and complex, but they impact nearly every single person in our state as a taxpayer or a consumer.

My role, as the legislator focused on taxes, has far-reaching implications and potential for significant impact. This session alone, I have authored and co-authored nearly 20 bills specifically focused on taxes and other functions of the Department of Revenue and the Department of Financial Institutions.

Among these 20 bills are several that create Wisconsin tax deductions and exemptions for teachers who purchase supplies (SB 130), student loan interest (SB 622), commercial radio and TV station property (SB 590), out-of-state emergency responders (SB 334), building materials for non-profits (SB 227) and more. I also authored a bill to create a continuing education requirement for CPAs (SB 532) and a bill to create a process by which to cash unclaimed savings bonds (SB 603).

Again, my wheelhouse may not be the most exciting place in the legislature, but these issues are important to every Wisconsinite in some way. I am proud of the work I do in my wheelhouse and will continue to look for ways to improve the tax and financial environment in Wisconsin.

For more information and to connect with me, visit my website <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/17/marklein> and subscribe to my weekly E-Update by sending an email to [Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov). Do not hesitate to call 800-978-8008 if you have input, ideas or need assistance with any state-related matters.