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# HOWARD MARKLEIN

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

## Capitol Update

By Senator Howard Marklein

March 24, 2016

### Legislative Session Wrap Up Part 2: Bills Passed on March 15

In last week's column I reviewed the 11 bills I authored or co-authored that were passed by the Senate on Tuesday, March 15, 2016. Governor Scott Walker signed two of these bills on Monday, March 21, 2016 as a part of his Cabinet on the Road events in southwest Wisconsin.

On Monday, the Governor and all of his cabinet secretaries toured, hosted meetings and held bill signings at 65 locations throughout Iowa, Grant, Richland, Crawford and Lafayette counties. It was a terrific showcase of southwest Wisconsin and an awesome opportunity for our communities to communicate directly with decision-makers in state government.

As a part of Cabinet on the Road, Governor Walker signed AB 512 / SB 384 – Frank Lloyd Wright Trail into Act 270 at Taliesin in Spring Green. This bill designates a highway route in the counties of Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, Waukesha, Jefferson, Dane, Iowa, Sauk, and Richland as the “Frank Lloyd Wright Trail,” highlighting buildings that have particular significance to Frank Lloyd Wright and his career.

He also signed AB 771 - Drug Law Enforcement Grant for Lafayette County into Act 271. This bill allocates funds to assist Lafayette County in funding a full or part-time officer who will be dedicated to a drug task force. The drug task forces are instrumental in fighting the growing influx of heroin and other drugs that are becoming an increasing problem to the rural areas and Lafayette County needed state support to participate and stem the flow of drugs into and through their county.

This week's column focuses on the other bills that were passed by the Senate and now move to Governor's desk for signature over the next several weeks. Following are highlights of some of the other 77 bills we passed:

- **Mental Health Funding for Counties** - The bill would shift \$2 million annually from the state Department of Health Services' mental health hospitals account to grants for county programs designed to keep drug users out of prison by placing them in treatment programs. The measure is part of a package of legislation Rep. John Nygren has introduced to help heroin users and slow the drug's spread.

- **Wood heaters (AB25)** – This bill protects the owners of wood-burning heaters from egregious Federal regulations. This bill prohibits the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from enforcing a federal regulation that changes emission standards for residential or commercial wood stoves that is more stringent than any new source performance standard in effect on December 31, 2014.

Many residents of the 17<sup>th</sup> Senate District benefit from efficient, low-cost wood-burning furnaces on their properties. The bill will protect our rights to use wood-burning heaters to heat our buildings and homes.

- **Restoring Recycling Grants (AB 515)** – This bill restores \$3 million to recycling grants for municipalities. During the 2015-16 budget deliberations, the legislature reduced the funding for recycling grants by \$4 million in the first year. However, this bill restores \$3 million of the reduction to bring the total investment in recycling grants to \$19 million.

The recycling grant program helps keep the cost of collecting and transporting recyclables, from households to processors and manufacturers, affordable. All participating municipalities will benefit from this legislation.

- **Modernizing Elections (SB295)** – Several changes to election laws:
  - Allows Veteran IDs for voting purposes.
  - Makes Voter Registration available to anyone, online.
  - Uses technology to clean up Wisconsin's voter rolls.
- **Alzheimers & Dementia Issues**
  - AB 786 – Dementia Crisis Unit – requires Department of Health Services to prepare a report describing where individuals who have dementia are currently placed in crisis situations and proposing a pilot program for coalitions of two or more counties to create dementia crisis units.
  - AB 787 – Respite Care – additional funding for DHS to fund respite care. This bill recognizes the importance of the family and caregivers who provide care for individuals with Alzheimers and dementia. Every caregiver, including family members, deserves a break to refresh and rejuvenate. This bill provides funding for DHS to help caregivers recharge so that they can continue to provide care for their loved ones.
  - AB 790 – Dementia training grants - requires the Department of Health Services to award grants to counties or regions of counties for their mobile crisis teams to obtain training on recognizing and serving individuals with dementia.

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. Do not hesitate to call 800-978-8008 if you have any questions or need assistance with any state-related matters.