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# HOWARD MARKLEIN

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

## Capitol Update

By Senator Howard Marklein

April 1, 2016

### “You’re Taking Nine Months of Vacation?”

The last floor session of the 2015-16 Legislative Session was on March 15, 2016. Over the last two weeks, I have shared highlights of the legislation we passed on the last day of our session. I am very proud of all we have accomplished over the last two years.

However, these updates have generated questions about what I will be doing for the remaining nine months of 2016 before the next legislative session begins in January 2017. Some readers have expressed concern that I will be taking nine months of vacation before we get back to work. I assure you that this is not my plan.

I plan to capitalize on this time to catch-up on visits and meetings I had to put on-hold during the session, continue to serve constituents who have questions or need assistance and to work ahead in anticipation of the next legislative session.

The next nine months are going to include the following:

- Summarizing and following-up on the outcomes of the last legislative session.
- Reviewing the legislation and concepts that did not pass for reintroduction or revision.
- Studying several large-scale issues that may require legislative activity in the next budget or session.
- Meeting with constituents, businesses, organizations, and individuals in the 17th Senate District for input, ideas and planning for 2017.
- Analyzing data and statistics related to many different issues as we prepare for 2017.
- ...and more.

There is also a lot of “quiet” work in the legislature that goes on outside of the formal legislative session. Each day, our team fields phone calls and emails from residents who need assistance navigating their state government. These one-on-one conversations are “quiet” work, but extremely important to the individuals who need our help. We will continue to fulfill this duty and encourage anyone who needs assistance to call or email our team.

Another example of the “quiet” work is the passive review process. I serve on the legislature’s Joint Finance Committee (JFC) and receive proposals from state agencies through the passive review process throughout the year. Agencies use this process to seek funding outside of the budget process and to change administrative rules outside of the legislative process. The JFC

oversees proposals related to funding and the Joint Committee for the Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR) oversees proposals related to rule changes.

During the passive review process, an agency submits a proposal and it is circulated to the JFC or JCRAR. Members have a specified time (usually 14 days) to object, which would then trigger the co-chairs of the committee to set a meeting of the committee. If no one objects, the rules or funding request would take effect immediately; if the committee does schedule a meeting, the committee would vote on the proposal. To view pending and approved JFC proposals: [https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lfb/jfc/100\\_section\\_16\\_505\\_16\\_515\\_passive\\_review\\_requests](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lfb/jfc/100_section_16_505_16_515_passive_review_requests)

This quiet process is important because it allows agencies to make rule changes and to spend taxpayer dollars and legislators must keep a thoughtful eye on each proposal. For example, last summer, a passive review request was circulated by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to spend \$532,800 of stewardship funds to purchase retired railroad acreage in Manitowoc and Barron counties.

I had concerns about the amount of money being spent to purchase the railroad land. I believed it was unlikely that the railroad would get their asking price from any other buyer because of the location of the properties. We directed the agency to re-negotiate and only allocated 75% of their request. The railroad accepted the lower price. This represented a savings of \$130,900 for the taxpayers of our state achieved through the passive review process.

In addition to the passive review process, ongoing constituent services, and proactive scheduling, I will continue to serve on the Governor's Commission on Government Reform and am hoping to lead a Legislative Study Committee related to the state's broadband grant program to insure we are meeting the needs of the people of our state, especially those in our rural communities.

Primarily, I will be spending the summer and fall connecting with residents of the 17<sup>th</sup> Senate District through public and private meetings and listening sessions, as well as tours and meetings of local groups and organizations. I will be taking a proactive approach throughout the next several months to learn, engage and listen so that I can design my legislative plan and committee work based on real needs of the people I serve.

I look forward to continuing to serve you, to seek your ideas, to hear your concerns and to plan for the future throughout the next nine months. If you would like me to visit with your company, organization or group, please contact me. I welcome every resident of the 17<sup>th</sup> Senate District to participate in the legislative process.

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 any questions or need assistance with any state-related matters.