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Statement on Extraordinary Session Bills

Despite the hysteria and knee jerk reactions that have abounded for the last week, these bills are not an assault on democracy or the powers of the Governor and Attorney General. I would encourage everyone to actually read these bills for themselves, and not listen to partisan rhetoric.

I spent days studying, debating and negotiating aspects of these bills. I was not elected to just vote yes or vote no. I was elected to read bills, make sound decisions, and try to improve legislation wherever I can.

The bills passed this week give the legislature greater oversight. If future governors seek to expand Medicaid with a cost of greater than \$7.5 million, or otherwise increase spending in healthcare, he or she will have to seek permission from the legislature just like he or she would with any other government program. As the legislature has done in the last several years we continued to restrain administrative rules by creating more accountability and ensuring that the legislature is the law-making body, not the bureaucracy. We gave more accountability to Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation programs and operations, and protected the Foxconn project, as well.

Governor Walker and his policies received about 58% of the vote of the 21st District last month. That's why we put into statute executive orders that implemented those policies and programs that have been enacted in the last eight years, including voter ID. On early voting, we guaranteed everyone in the state will have two weeks of early voting and extended the end of early voting by two days, and otherwise complied with the court order which had struck down the previous early voting law. No elections were moved.

However, I am most disappointed that we did not find common ground on pre-existing conditions. Senate Republicans actually tried to broaden and strengthen the bill passed by the Assembly, and make it closer to Obamacare. Unfortunately, Democratic co-authors took their names off the bill at the last minute and voted against it; along with two Republicans who oppose the pre-existing condition coverage in Obamacare.

Reasonable people can disagree about the wisdom, timing and policies of the bills. That is healthy and fruitful. Rhetoric, name-calling, and tribalism is not. I encourage you to educate yourself and read the bills and amendments, or the non-partisan summary that will be released later this week. Decide for yourself what is and is not appropriate.

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