

April 14, 2023



Dear friends,

A few short weeks ago, we recognized Cesar Chavez Day for all of his efforts on behalf of the civil rights and labor movements. Today we honor his contemporary and friend, Dolores Huerta. Maybe less well known but certainly no less important, Huerta has been a powerhouse for social justice throughout her life. She was born on this day in 1930 in a small mining town in New Mexico and worked as a school teacher before becoming a community organizer and activist, founding the National Farm Workers Association, predecessor of the United Farm Workers, with Cesar Chavez. Today, at 93 years old, she continues to be a force for change for workers, women and people of color. We thank her for her tireless advocacy and take inspiration from her example.

Sincerely,

Bob

## small business **SPOTLIGHT**



### ***Kouzena 220 Brings Greek Flavor to Racine***

If you are looking for authentic, i.e. not Americanized, Greek food, Kouzena 220, located at 220 Sixth Street in Racine, is the place for you. Owner Peter Maheras can often be found in the kitchen, and family members pitch in, as well. In fact, while plans to open Kouzena 220 started in 2018, the building has been in the Maheras family since 1985. You'll find hours of operation and a copy of the menu at <https://www.kouzena220.com/>.

### **In Case You Missed It**



### ***Office Hours This Saturday***

**Saturday, April 12, from 11 am to 12 pm**, I'll be holding an "Office Hours" listening session in Activity Room A of Kenosha's Northside Library, 1500 27<sup>th</sup> Ave. Stop in to share your thoughts on the happenings in our state, including the state budget.



## ***State Hits Record Low Unemployment Levels***

The state Department of Workforce Development (DWD) recently released employment data for February 2023, which showed Wisconsin seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped to a record-low 2.7%. That was down from 2.9% in January. The previous record was 2.8%, set in January 2022. In terms of raw numbers, the number of unemployed people in the state dropped by 5,100 from January to February, with a total of 82,900 unemployed people, also a new low.



## ***Legislature's Budget Committee Hear from Wisconsin Residents on State Budget***

This week, the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee held budget hearings in Eau Claire and Wisconsin Dells, following up on last week's hearing Waukesha. Big crowds came out to all three hearings, advocating for budget issues such as Medicaid expansion; paid family leave; funding for education; and more. The final hearing will be held on April 26 in Minocqua. If you haven't been able to attend one of the listening sessions but want to share your thoughts on the state budget, you can submit written comments to the committee at

[budget.comments@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:budget.comments@legis.wisconsin.gov).



## ***Thousands Have Received “Help for Homeowners”; Funds Still Available***

To date, more than 5,400 Wisconsin individuals and families have received assistance through the “Help for Homeowners” program. More than \$39 million in mortgage, utility and property tax payment aid has been distributed statewide. The program, which provides up to \$40,000 in financial assistance to qualified homeowners, is still accepting applications.

The program is open to Wisconsin homeowners who have experienced a financial hardship since January 21, 2020, and meet income eligibility and other program requirements. Mortgage and interest payments, real estate taxes, lot fees, home energy and other utilities, and other eligible payments are made directly to service providers. More information and program applications are available at [www.homeownerhelp.wi.gov](http://www.homeownerhelp.wi.gov).



## ***2023 Tax Day Approaches***

The deadline to file your state and federal income tax returns for tax year 2022 is just days away. Tax returns are due this year by April 18 since April 15 falls on a Saturday and Emancipation Day, a holiday observed in Washington, D.C., is on Monday, April 17. If you need more time, you can request an extension, which would give you until October 16 to file your returns. You must request the extension by April 18 to avoid any penalties. Find more on federal tax returns at <https://www.irs.gov/>; you can find answers to questions about state taxes at <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/home.aspx/>.



## ***Fire Risk Very High for Racine and Kenosha***

Racine and Kenosha residents are encouraged to be vigilant about burning at this time. The forecast is calling for warm, dry, windy conditions, which combined increase the fire risk. Embers can quickly escape a “controlled burn” and escalate out of control before you know it. The DNR has responded to dozens of wildfires in the last week.



## ***Wisconsin Families Can Now Get Ten (10) Free Covid Tests Each Month***

Wisconsin residents can now get up to 10 free Covid-19 testing kits sent straight to their doors each month as part of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services’ Say Yes! Covid Test Program. Since starting in September 2022, the [Say Yes! Covid Test](#) program has delivered more than 1.6 million free test kits throughout Wisconsin. Households were previously limited to one free test kit (5 tests) per month but can now receive two, containing 10 tests. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has extended the shelf life for several Covid tests, including iHealth, which are delivered through the Say Yes! Covid Test program; tests are now good for up to one year. To order the test kits online, visit [sayyescovidhometest.org](http://sayyescovidhometest.org).

Those without reliable internet access or who have questions about ordering can dial 211 or 877-947-2211 for assistance.

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## ***Take My Legislative Survey***

It's very important to me as a legislator to hear what you think about the important issues of the day. I've put together a survey on a variety of topics that I am hoping you will take the time to complete. You can find an online version of the survey at <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/22/wirch/surveys-and-petitions/2022-legislative-survey>.