

April 28, 2023



Dear friends,

In the U.S., Arbor Day is celebrated on the last Friday in April. It is marked by the planting of trees and emphasizes caring for them as a way to sustainably protect the planet's resources. People often dedicate trees to loved ones. The ecological importance of trees can't be overstated, and the Arbor Day concept has spread to countries and regions around the world. In the spirit of Arbor Day, you'll find below an article about an effort by Governor Tony Evers to plant one trillion new trees in Wisconsin. Until next time, stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Bob

small business
SPOTLIGHT 

★ *Downtown Racine* ★
FIRST FRIDAYS

“First Fridays” Return to Downtown Racine

After a winter that seemed to stretch on and on and on, one of the area’s favorite warmer-weather events is back. The very first “First Friday” of the year will take place on Friday, May 5, 2023. As the day also happens to be Cinco de Mayo, there will definitely be a Latin American flair to the event, with nachos and margarita samples available throughout downtown, and specials at various locations including \$5 off and a 5-15% discount. Live music and other entertainment will be on hand. You will find a list of participating locations and specials at [RacineDowntown.com](https://www.RacineDowntown.com).

In Case You Missed It

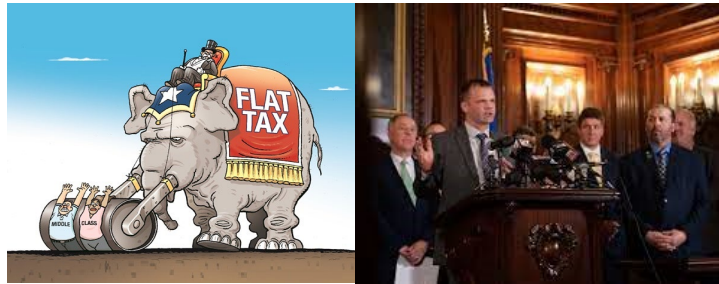


Republicans on Finance Committee List 545 Items They Plan to Remove from Governor’s Budget

The Republican majority on the Legislature’s Joint Finance Committee (JFC) have released a list of 545 items they plan to remove from Governor Tony Evers’ 2023 state budget proposal when the committee meets next Tuesday. Among the proposals to be removed are: a cap on insulin co-pays; a new paid family leave program; a middle class tax cut; Medicaid expansion; a homeless veteran rental assistance program; making Juneteenth a state holiday; automatic voter registration; a family caregiver tax credit; expansion of the Homestead and Earned Income Tax Credits; universal background checks; investments in PFAS remediation and lead removal; a

\$567 million increase in shared revenue to counties and municipalities; and drivers' cards for undocumented immigrants.

While this is a setback, it doesn't necessarily mean the end for these programs. It is still possible for any of them to be included in the final budget. You can find the full list of items to be removed at <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/raw/cid/1722427>, and there is a full list of JFC members at <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2023/committees/joint/2640>.



Wisconsin Republicans Push “Flat Tax” to Benefit the Rich

This week, the Senate Committee on Universities and Revenue held a public hearing on Senate Bill 1 (SB1), authored by State Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu (R-Oostburg). The bill would establish one flat income tax rate of 3.25% in Wisconsin. Under current law, the state has a progressive income tax structure, starting at 3.54% for the lowest earners up to 7.65% for those with the highest incomes. Just based on those numbers alone, you can see how the wealthiest Wisconsinites would benefit far more from this plan than those families living paycheck to paycheck. In addition, the plan would cost the state \$5 billion per year, which would suck up almost all of the current budget surplus and have to be made up for with cuts elsewhere in future budgets. Governor Evers has expressed opposition.



Local Law Enforcement Issues Warning to Owners of Kia and Hyundai Vehicles

People who own Kia and Hyundai vehicles should take every precaution to prevent their vehicles from being broken into and/or stolen. Law enforcement has reported a steep rise in vehicle thefts, particularly among certain Kia and Hyundai models. The most-targeted Kia models are the Kia Forte, Kia Soul and Kia Sorento; Hyundai's most-frequently targeted models are the Hyundai Elantra, Hyundai Sonata and Hyundai Accent. Law enforcement

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recommends owners of these vehicles use an anti-theft device such as The Club and park their vehicles in a garage or a well-lit area.



State Planted Almost 13 Million Trees in 2022

On Earth Day 2021, Governor Tony Evers signed Executive Order #112, joining the global Trillion Tree Pledge, committed to planting 75 million new trees in rural and urban areas and conserving 125,000 acres of forest in Wisconsin by 2030. This week, an annual report found that more than 12.9 million trees were planted in Wisconsin in 2022. This builds on the more than 9 million planted in 2021. “Planting trees and conserving forestlands are simple but powerful tools to help store carbon dioxide, improve air quality, protect wildlife habitats, and combat climate change, all while supporting our statewide economies. We are thrilled to be nearly a third of the way through reaching our tree planting goal, and we’re going to continue this momentum forward so we can keep building a healthier, more sustainable future for our state,” Evers said.



Local Providers Among Winners of 2023 Dept. of Health Services “BigShot Award” Winners

This week, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services announced winners of the 2023 BigShot Awards. The BigShot Awards are an annual recognition that celebrates Vaccines for Children Program providers who are leading the way in protecting children’s health by ensuring their pediatric patients are up to date on their vaccinations. Local winners include Aurora Health Care – Kenosha in the Hepatitis A Vaccine category and Aurora Health Care – Racine in the Routine Childhood Vaccine category. Congratulations, and thank you, to all the winners.



Legislative Democrats to Hold Virtual Budget Listening Session

If you want to provide input on the 2023-2025 state budget but haven't been able to make it one of the Joint Finance Committee's budget listening sessions, you can take part in a virtual listening session with Legislative Democrats. The session will be held on Monday, May 1, at 7 pm. You will find more information [here](#).



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.

Those without reliable internet access or who have questions about ordering can dial 211 or 877-947-2211 for assistance. **THIS PROGRAM IS LIKELY TO GO AWAY IN MAY, WHEN THE COVID HEALTH EMERGENCY ENDS.**



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>.