



SENATOR JANET BEWLEY

WISCONSIN STATE SENATE

FACTS ARE STUBBORN THINGS PART II

Like many things, facts become more stubborn with age.

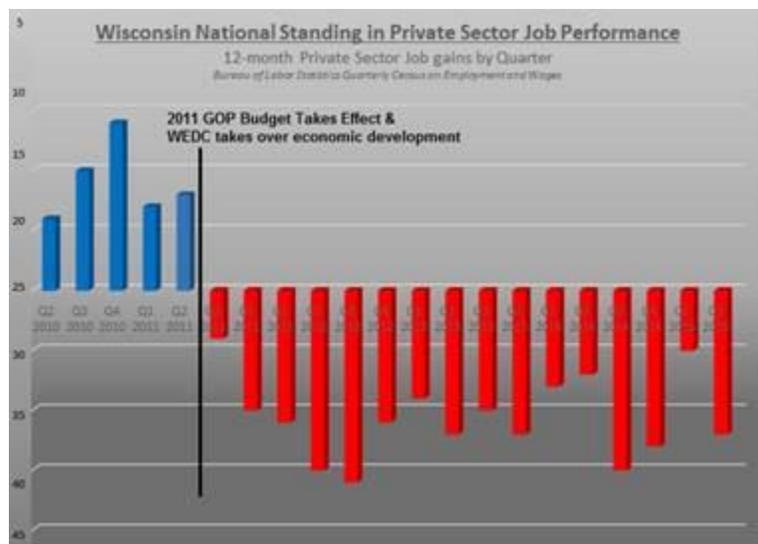
Last summer, the state fell behind the national economy for the 14th straight quarter. My Republican colleagues responded with a fall session that put politicians ahead of people and made elections and campaign finance laws their top priority.

2015 ended with new jobs numbers showing Wisconsin even further behind the nation and our neighbors, trailing for an alarming 16th straight quarter.

Anyone who's operated a successful business knows that honest assessments and changes in course are key to long-term success. Unfortunately, as the Legislature gears up to renew our session nothing we've heard from legislative leaders or the administration shows they plan to focus on what's important: Jobs. Roads. Schools.

Gold standard numbers on private sector job creation show Wisconsin dropping to 37th nationally. Wisconsin has trailed the nation every quarter since the Governor's first budget was signed, which put his economic plan into effect and gave the scandal-plagued Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation the reins of Wisconsin's economic efforts.

Before that first 2011 budget Wisconsin had topped the national rate of private sector gains for five straight quarters, as shown below. The results of that economic plan are clear:



Neighboring Minnesota just logged its 17th quarter out of 18 ahead of Wisconsin in private sector job gains.

Sadly, instead of taking honest stock and considering a course correction like a private sector business would, the Governor appears ready to build on the mistakes of his budgets rather than the successes that had Wisconsin 11th nationally before he took office.

In wrapping up a tumultuous year and attempting to account for dismal job numbers the Governor attributed that performance to a lack of trained workers in our state.



25th Senate District

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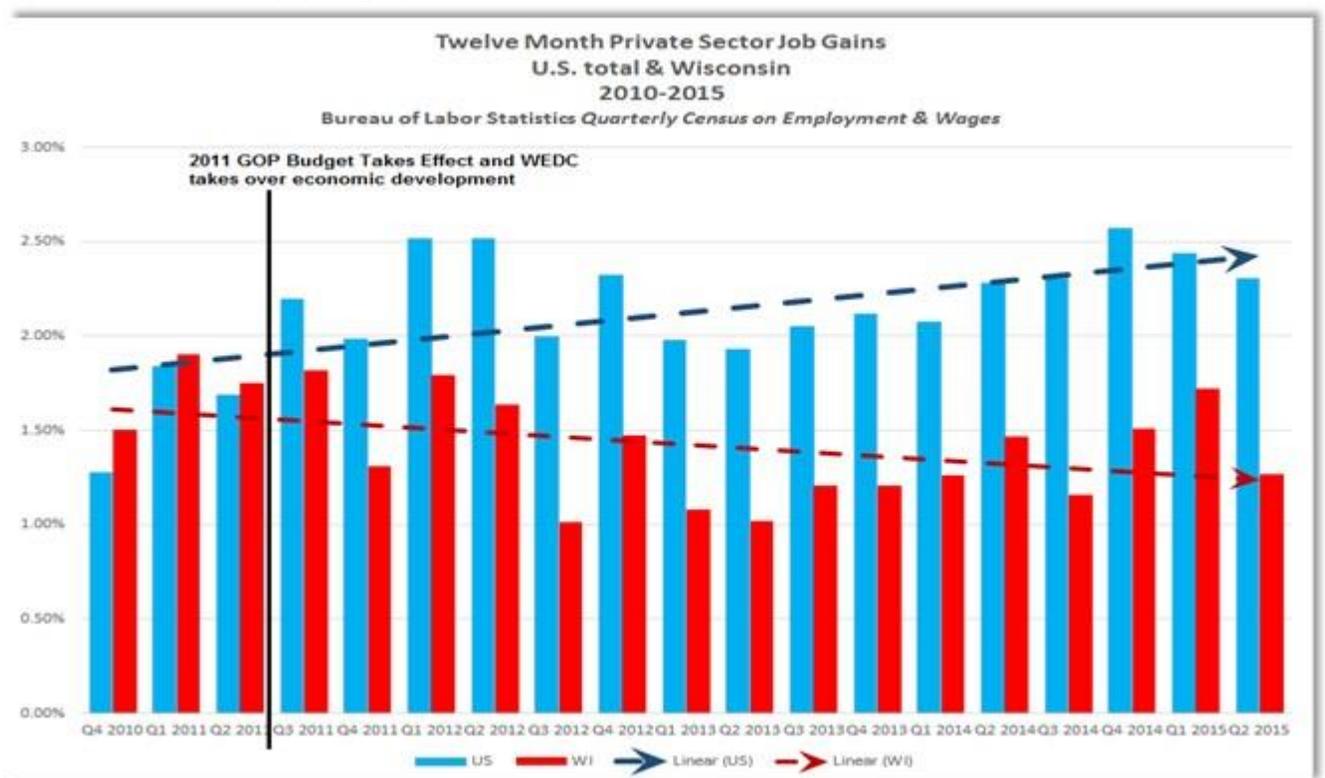
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In the North, we know all too well the losses of teachers and experience that have come from three budgets of cuts to our children’s public schools. This session went beyond that first line of education to strike our colleges, including the two-year campuses and Extensions that are the backbone of so many Northern communities, with the steepest cuts in state history.

Over three state budgets the Walker Administration, the state’s bureaucracy, has seen “General Executive” spending rise to 5% of the state budget. The budgets the Governor has signed have seen higher education drop from 9.2% of the state budget to just 6.9%.

At the same time our technical colleges have nearly 20% less to spend on exactly the activity the Governor says we need most – hands-on education and training -- than they had before the Republicans passed their first budget.

And the results keep piling up:



It’s time to leave the politics that drove policies before the Governor dropped his Presidential bid behind and take a page from the successful private sector businesses we hope to bring and keep here. It’s time to accept facts, as private firms do each and every new year. It’s time to stop making false claims about the quality of Wisconsin workers and commit to the best tools we’ve had for generations – our schools and our colleges.

Unfortunately my Republican colleagues’ stubborn refusal to acknowledge facts has already put our state six more months behind the national economy. It’s time to face the reality of the New Year and focus on the priorities important to people outside the Capitol: Jobs. Roads. And Schools.