

Protecting our Kids: As a society, our most important job is doing well by the next generation. Obviously, families bear the greatest responsibility for raising children, but our state can and should help kids succeed. These two articles highlight efforts to bring health care to all children and to make our schools safer.

Providing Health Care to Every Wisconsin Child

This February, Wisconsin achieved a long sought-after goal – health care for every child in our state. The recently-passed state budget includes an important initiative that extends health care to tens of thousands of the uninsured in Wisconsin. While I believe health care should be universally available, an essential first step in that goal is to ensure that children, the most vulnerable segment of the uninsured, are covered.

Wisconsin should be proud to have achieved this step for decency.

The new program is known as BadgerCare Plus. BadgerCare Plus will provide affordable, quality health care to all Wisconsin children.

Here in Dane County, BadgerCare Plus will cover about 4,000 children who have prior to this time been without health insurance.

BadgerCare Plus will also extend benefits to other

uninsured residents. Pregnant women are eligible for care, and depending on income, self-employed families, farm families and young adults leaving foster care may also receive health insurance. In January 2009, BadgerCare Plus will be further expanded to allow childless adults from ages 18 to 64 to register for the insurance. BadgerCare Plus will help ensure that 98 percent of

Wisconsinites have access to affordable health care.

Under BadgerCare Plus, families can pick between two benefit plans. Premiums and co-pays will be very affordable and will vary based on the ability to pay. The new plan will encourage preventive medicine to hold down costs.

BadgerCare Plus is simple to understand and use. Go to https://access.wisconsin.gov to learn more or call 1-800-362-3002.



One of the most enjoyable parts of my job is speaking to school children who visit the State Capitol. I hope their visits will encourage them to be active participants in our democracy.

Legislation Aims to Make Our Schools Safer

A recent headline in the local newspaper put the stark choice for local educators succinctly, "Smaller class sizes or more school security for Madison schools?" The reason for this dilemma is that state-imposed spending caps force many school districts to choose between spending on education and spending on security.

That's why I've introduced legislation to allow Wisconsin school districts to fund necessary school security measures without running afoul of state spending caps. The proposal will allow school districts to spend up to \$100 per pupil above the state-imposed spending caps for security personnel, building modifications and the equipment necessary to prevent criminal activity and curb violence.

As a former high school teacher, I believe we must do all we reasonably can to provide kids with a safe place to learn and teachers with a safe place to teach. School districts should not have to choose between spending on education and spending on security.

As a former high school teacher, I believe we must do all we reasonably can to provide kids with a safe place to learn and teachers with a safe place to teach.

My bill is a different approach from that proposed by Republican Representative Frank Lasee who wants to arm teachers.

I'm strongly opposed to Representative Lasee's idea because I don't believe that

being armed guards is the appropriate role for teachers. Far better is having educators work with local law enforcement to develop a comprehensive approach to school security to create the best and safest learning environment.

2008 Annual Legislative Survey

Thank you for taking a few minutes to answer my 2008 Annual Legislative Survey. Because of space limitations, it is not possible to include every important issue and the choices provided for each question may not adequately reflect your opinions. Please use the space provided to add your comments. I personally read each questionnaire that is returned.

If more than one member of your household would like to answer the survey, please use a different colored mark for each person. To return your responses, simply cut on the dotted line, fold so the return address on the back page is showing and tape it at the top.

Thank you for your participation!

Health Care

Do you believe it is the appropriate role of government to make sure that all Wisconsin residents have health insurance, either from their employer or another source?

Yes No Undecided

How satisfied are you with the current health care system in Wisconsin?

Strongly Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Strongly Dissatisfied Undecided

Traffic

Current law only allows the issuance of a citation for failure to use a seat belt if another traffic violation has occurred. Legislation has been introduced that would allow police to enforce the seat belt law when there is no other traffic violation. Would you support this legislation?

Yes No Undecided

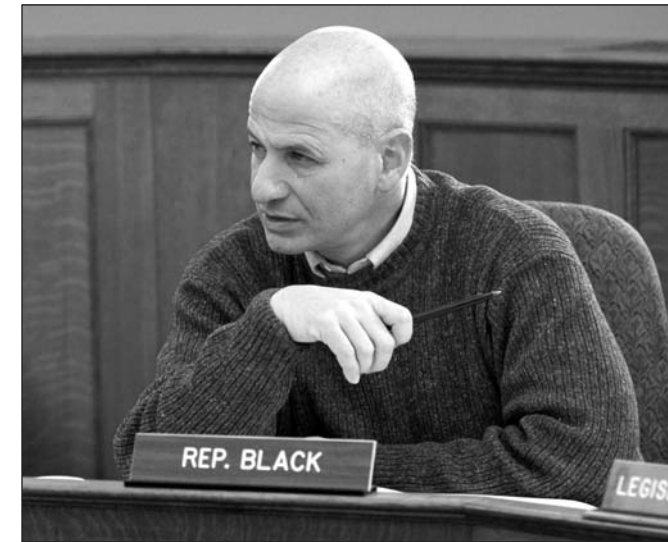
Legislation has been introduced to enforce the traffic signals law by the use of cameras. Under the proposal, cameras would be installed at traffic lights to take a picture of the license plate of cars that run a red light. Citations could be issued only if the car had first entered the intersection after the light had turned red. Would you support this legislation?

Yes No Undecided

Hunting Age

Currently, the minimum age for hunting is 12-years-old. Legislation has been introduced to lower the age to 10 if the child is hunting with an adult. Under the proposal, the child must be within arm's reach of the adult. Do you support this legislation?

Yes No Undecided



Your responses to my legislative survey provide me with a great deal of guidance when I'm considering legislation at the State Capitol.

Guns

Do you support changing Wisconsin law in order to allow the carrying of concealed weapons in our state?

Yes No Undecided

Under current state law, an individual in Wisconsin must show identification and undergo a criminal background check before buying a firearm from a licensed gun dealer. But, if an individual buys a gun from a private seller, they do not have to submit to a criminal background check. Would you support legislation that requires an individual to show identification and undergo a criminal background check before purchasing a gun from a private seller?

Yes No Undecided

Rep. Frank Lasee (R-Belleveue) has proposed that school teachers be allowed to carry guns in Wisconsin schools to strengthen school security. Do you support this proposal?

Yes No Undecided

Environment

The eight Great Lakes states have agreed to a compact to prevent water from the Great Lakes from being diverted outside the Great Lakes Basin. Each Governor would have the right to veto any major diversion in another state. Do you believe Wisconsin should approve the Great Lakes Compact?

Yes No Undecided

Legislation has been introduced in Wisconsin to reduce carbon dioxide emissions which are the leading cause of global warming. This proposal would require utilities and other major industries in the state to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 25 percent by 2020. Do you support this legislation?

Yes No Undecided

Legislation has been introduced to require that all gasoline sold in Wisconsin contain at least 10 percent ethanol. Do you support this legislation?

Yes No Undecided

Abortion

Which statement closely reflects your opinion about abortion and the law?

Abortion should remain legal
Abortion should be illegal except for rape, incest or health of the mother
Abortion should be illegal except if the mother's life is in danger
Abortion should be illegal without exception
Undecided

Your Comments:

Blank lines for writing comments.



Wisconsin BLUE BOOK Available

The 2007-08 State of Wisconsin Blue Book is now available. The Blue Book is the primary reference

book about Wisconsin government and civic life. It contains information on state government, including biographies of elected officials, as well as sections on the economy, demographics, geography and history of our state. If you would like a Blue Book, please let me know. You can also read the Blue Book online. Go to www.spencerblack.com and click on the "Legislative Resources" link.

Job Performance

How would you rate the performance of the following state officials?

Table with 5 columns: Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, Undecided. Rows list Governor Jim Doyle, U.S. Senator Herb Kohl, U.S. Senator Russ Feingold, U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin, State Senator Fred Risse, and State Rep. Spencer Black.

Law Continues to Help Seniors

One of the laws I'm most proud of enacting is the Spousal Impoverishment Prevention Act. It's an awkward name for a law that has made a big difference in the lives of thousands of senior citizens.

The Spousal Impoverishment Prevention Act allows the spouses of nursing home residents to keep a reasonable level of income and assets, as well as their home, when their spouse is in a nursing home.

Prior to passage of this law, senior citizens were often forced to go broke to pay the nursing home bills for their wife or husband. I fought for this law because I heard from so many senior citizens who had worked hard all their life and had carefully saved for their retirement years only to see all their hard-earned savings go to nursing home bills.

Prior to this law, the spouse of a nursing home resident

could retain only \$2,000 in assets and \$471 a month in income. The rest had to go to pay nursing home bills.

For the past 18 years, things have been different. When I wrote this law, I made sure that it would be indexed for inflation so the protections would remain strong for senior citizens. Now, a couple can retain up to \$104,000 of their assets as well as their house, car and other belongings. That amount will continue to be adjusted for inflation.

It's hard enough to have illness force a spouse to need nursing home care. It was tragic when, before this law took effect in 1990, economic woes compounded an already difficult situation.

For 18 years now, the Spousal Impoverishment Prevention Act has treated the spouses of nursing home residents with compassion and dignity.



The Spousal Impoverishment Prevention Act has been a big help to many seniors. Here, I'm discussing this law with the Board of the Dane County SOS Senior Council.

The Fight Against Global Warming

Scientists have concluded that human activity is changing global climate patterns in a way that will be devastating to our planet. Wisconsin will be especially hard hit by climate disruption with major impacts to wildlife, water quality and quantity, forestry and agriculture.

That's why I have introduced a major legislative initiative to combat global warming. The Wisconsin Safe Climate Act would require that carbon dioxide emissions, the main cause of global warming, be significantly reduced.

A broad coalition of Wisconsin conservation, faith, farm, health and labor groups are supporting this legislation.

Because of the failure of Washington to act on this vital issue, states have been taking the lead. Seventeen major states have already taken major steps to combat climate change. Wisconsin should join the effort.

I introduced this legislation because

I believe we have an obligation to the next generation. Climate change

poses a grave threat to future quality of life of our children and their children.

Closing the Revolving Door

I have introduced legislation to close the "revolving door" between government and special interests. The bill prohibits a legislator from accepting a job as a lobbyist for 12 months after leaving office. In recent years, a number of legislators have left service in the Legislature only to turn around and earn high incomes lobbying for special interests.

I believe it is unseemly to see legislators voting one day on important legislation and coming back to the Capitol the next day as highly-paid special interest lobbyists. The ethical climate of Wisconsin politics needs to be cleaned up and this bill is a step in that direction.

Most state officials are already prohibited from lobbying their agency for one year. Unfortunately, legislators have exempted themselves from that common sense rule.

It is time to close the loophole and subject legislators to the same standard that applies to other state employees.

Last May, the Senate approved this bill on a strong, bipartisan vote. Unfortunately, the bill has been stalled in the Republican-controlled Assembly.

State Representative Spencer Black

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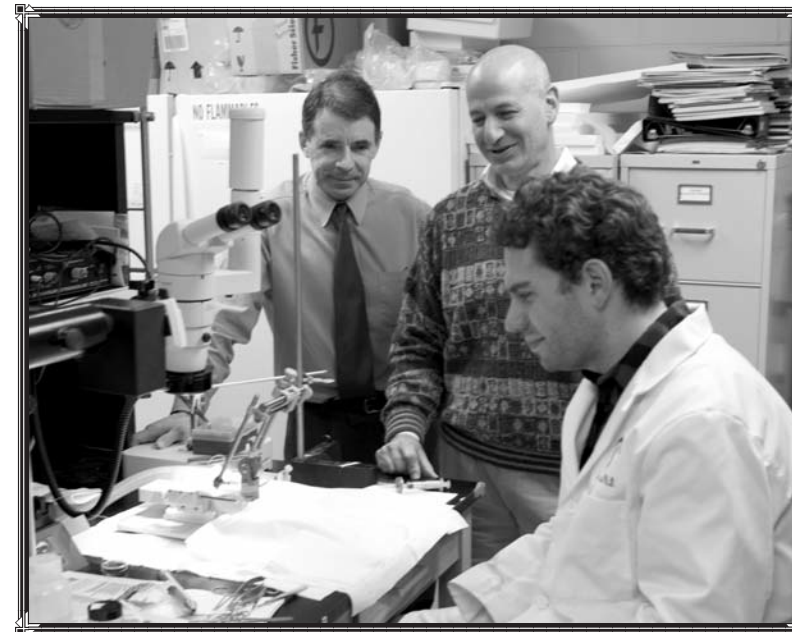
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Stem Cell Research

I recently visited the Myelin Lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Ian Duncan and Dr. Eric Larsen explained to me their groundbreaking work to develop a treatment using stem cells to significantly improve the lives of M.S. patients. Stem cell research like this holds the promise of important new medical advances. That's why I strongly support stem cell research and I have fought against the proposals of some legislators to restrict stem cell research at our University.

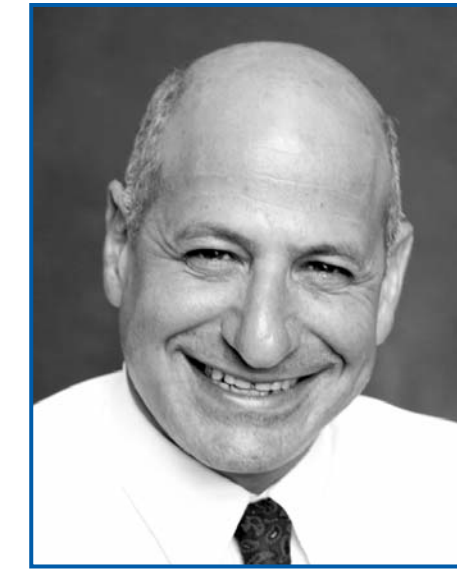


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Spencer Black
State Representative



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State Representative Spencer Black

Capitol Report

Spring 2008

Dear Neighbor:

This issue of the Capitol Report includes my 2008 Annual Legislative Survey. I look forward to reading every reply, so I hope you will take a few minutes to complete and return your survey. I will post the results of the 2008 survey beginning May 1 on my website (www.spencerblack.com). If you prefer, I will be glad to mail you the results — just note that on your response.

This has been a decidedly mixed and often frustrating session of the State Legislature. This session has been marked by frequent partisan gridlock which resulted in a much delayed budget and stalemate on some key issues. However, a few significant initiatives were passed, especially in the areas of the environment, health care and education.

I have worked on a wide variety of issues including the environment, education, health care, tax policy, consumer protection and ethics reform. I have been able to enact some of the measures I sought. In other cases, I hope that I have laid the groundwork for success in the future, especially if the November elections result in a change in the control of the Assembly.

An important environmental success was the achievement of a ten year extension and major expansion of the Stewardship Fund. The Stewardship Fund is Wisconsin's land conservation program which has helped to expand state parks and forests, protect natural areas and wildlife habitat and provide outdoor recreational opportunity. Since I first authored the Stewardship Fund in 1990, it has protected more than half a million acres of the best of outdoor Wisconsin. The extension of the fund until 2020 will help protect the scenic beauty and natural heritage that make our state so special.

Another major achievement was expansion of state health programs to provide health care to every child in our state. An article in this newsletter explains this further. The University received greater support and an increase in student financial aid that will help moderate-income

students achieve a higher education. Tougher enforcement of our ethics and elections laws was enacted. In addition, parents of young children and families of the elderly will receive a tax break for expenses they incur for care of their family members.

However, much remains undone. Many environmental initiatives, efforts to reform campaign finance, to provide a property tax break for the middle class and to improve child care were stymied. My time in the Legislature has taught me it often takes great persistence to pass legislation and I'm hard-headed enough to keep fighting. For example, I first started fighting for the dependent care tax benefit (which finally passed this session) more than twenty years ago!

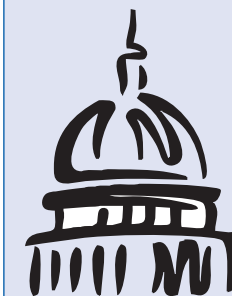
It is an honor to serve as your State Representative.

Sincerely,

Spence

Spencer Black
State Representative

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