



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
FREDERICK P. KESSLER
 BUDGET UPDATE 2007

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
FREDERICK P. KESSLER
 12TH DISTRICT
 WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

Dear Neighbor:

One of my responsibilities as your State Representative is to keep you informed of legislation pending in Madison.

On October 23rd the state budget was approved by the Wisconsin State Assembly. The budget is the most significant bill we consider during each two-year period. State spending, aid to local governments and school districts, and taxes are all incorporated in the biennial budget bill.

This newsletter highlights some of the significant budget decisions and their impact on our neighborhood. I fought hard to keep property taxes down and to assure that Milwaukee and Wauwatosa were treated fairly in the budget. I led the fight to correct the funding formula that forces Milwaukee taxpayers to pay more to send students to Milwaukee parental choice schools than to Milwaukee Public Schools. Unfortunately, a funding flaw fix was not included in this budget. I will continue to work with the Governor to change this flaw.

If I am able to do the best job representing you, I must know how you feel about pending legislation. Please contact me if you have strong opinions about any pending bills. My office is available to assist you in any dealings with state agencies.

Thank you for helping me do my job as the 12th District's Representative in the State Capitol.

Yours sincerely,

Frederick P. Kessler

FREDERICK P. KESSLER
 State Representative
 12th Assembly District

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FREE FOR THE ASKING

The following items are available at no charge from my office. Some publications are limited and are available on a first come, first served basis.

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State Rep. Frederick P. Kessler
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- Wisconsin Travel Guide 2007**
 This 80-page guide highlights nearly 500 of Wisconsin's top travel attractions including museums, family amusements, historic sites, state parks, casinos and more. Arranged geographically, it contains contact information for each attraction including the mailing address, phone number, Web site, hours/seasons of operation and a brief description.
- 2007-2008 Fall/Winter Calendar of Events**
 This full-color, 40-page booklet guides travelers to winter fun including performing arts, museum exhibits, and more than 500 fall festivals, holiday celebrations and winter events. Brief descriptions and phone numbers are included for each event.
- Wisconsin State Parks Guide**
 Explore Wisconsin's 95 state parks, forests and trails with this handy glove box sized guide that includes a locator map, narrative descriptions, and contact phone numbers.
- State Highway Map**
 The State of Wisconsin official highway map is published at state expense and provided by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

12TH DISTRICT 2007-2009 BUDGET UPDATE

I reluctantly cast my vote in favor of the state budget compromise on October 23rd. This was a very difficult vote because the bill contained both positive and negative features. I carefully weighed the impact that the budget would have on the people that I represent. The fact that the budget had been delayed for nearly 4 months was a consideration in my vote. I did not want the citizens to have to wait even longer. Here are some of the factors I considered in determining my vote on the 2007-2009 state budget.

POSITIVES

Healthcare

Healthcare is the most critical issue facing Wisconsin. While Wisconsin is consistently ranked among the best healthcare systems in the country, issues of cost and access are a major concern to many Wisconsin families.

The budget included the BadgerCare Plus program which will merge Family Medicaid, BadgerCare, and Healthy Start to form a comprehensive health insurance program for low income children and families. It will provide healthcare coverage to all children in Wisconsin and help ensure that 98% of Wisconsin's citizens have access to healthcare.

The budget also includes \$20 million to expand Family Care, which is an important program that provides managed long-term care services to elderly and disabled recipients throughout Wisconsin.

Finally, the new state budget makes every dollar that families pay in health premiums completely tax free.

Education

Education is the key to our state's growth in the future. This budget makes education a priority.

K-12 schools will receive an additional \$525 million in direct state aid and school property tax credits. The Milwaukee Public School system specifically will receive \$10 million in new funding to help increase achievement in math and science.

This budget provides extra assistance to our youngest students by allocating an extra \$3 million for 4-year-old kindergarten and \$27 million to expand the SAGE program which promotes smaller class sizes for the children in kindergarten through third grade and allows for increased collaboration between schools and communities.

The budget also makes higher education a priority. It fully funds the University of Wisconsin System's Growth Agenda. This will provide the resources for the UW campuses across the state to continue expanding to meet the needs of the next generation. The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee was treated very well. It will receive \$9 million in research grants as part of its Research Growth Initiative. UWM will also receive additional money to meet its expansion needs. Milwaukee's Medical College of Wisconsin will receive \$12 million in state support for research efforts as well.

To help ensure that our young people can continue to afford the high costs of higher education, the budget includes a \$32 million increase in tuition assistance. The budget also includes a \$3 million increase in Workforce Advancement Training Grants administered by the Wisconsin Technical College System.

Environment

The budget reauthorizes the bipartisan Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson Stewardship program for the next 10 years. It authorizes over \$850 million in bonding to protect our wildlife, woodlands and wide-open spaces. As our population grows it is important to protect recreational areas.

Youth Programs

The budget allocates \$1 million for the Youth Summer Jobs Program to give our young people summer jobs so that they can be productive during their time off from school, make some money and gain valuable workforce experience.

NEGATIVES

The original cut in shared revenue to municipalities which the State Assembly's Republican majority supported was not implemented, but the budget still does not offer extra state aid to cities. Additional aid could have helped Milwaukee address infrastructure and internal costs.

The 2007-2009 budget also did not alter the funding formula to correct the funding shortfall in the Milwaukee school choice program. This funding flaw continues to require Milwaukee taxpayers to carry the burden of paying 37.5% of the cost per student in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program as opposed to 25% of the cost per student in Milwaukee Public Schools. This funding flaw was almost enough to make me oppose the compromise. MPS does not get to count choice students in order to receive per pupil aid from the state, but we must pay for them from our property taxes. I will continue to work to change this flaw.

Finally, I was disappointed that the budget did not include a comprehensive healthcare program. Early in the budget process I had supported the Healthy Wisconsin program. Healthy Wisconsin would have made healthcare available to all the people of Wisconsin. Sadly, the Republicans who control the Assembly blocked that effort and refused to negotiate on any budget compromise that included the program. Healthy Wisconsin will now continue as a separate piece of legislation.

College Scholarship

My wife, a Judge on the State Court of Appeals, and I have been very blessed. Because of this, we decided to help young people to go to college. We created the Joan and Fred Kessler Student Leadership Scholarships three years ago. Our scholarship program provides \$1,000 each to a graduate of Vincent High School and Madison University High School for attendance at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

The winners are selected by a committee of three retired educators from Milwaukee Public Schools, not by Joan and myself. The 2007 winners were Ashley Walls from Madison University High School and Karlton Lattimore from Vincent High School.

If you or any of your friends, relatives or neighbors have a child who will graduate from either of these schools next year, please encourage them to ask their guidance counselor for a scholarship application. The application deadline is March 28, 2008. We will continue to offer these scholarships for the next several years at both of the high schools.

It is our hope that the student council leaders and the class officers of today will become the community and political leaders of tomorrow. Joan and I are thankful that we can provide this small assistance along the path to education for our future leaders. We wish both of this year's scholarship recipients continued success.