



# STATE REPRESENTATIVE FREDERICK P. KESSLER

## SPRING 2008

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

Dear Neighbor:

For the past four years it has been an honor to serve as your voice in Madison. Thank you for giving me that honor.

The 2007-2008 legislative session recently came to a conclusion. This session was largely disappointing. Deadlock between the houses delayed a budget agreement and prevented the legislature from taking the necessary action on several critical issues facing the state including healthcare reform. I am hopeful that the legislature will be more productive next session.

Many of you contacted me on important issues this session and I appreciate hearing your views. It is important that I know how you feel about pending legislation. My office is also available to assist you in working with state agencies. I hope you will continue to contact me if I can assist you.

Thanks again for allowing me to serve you.

Yours sincerely,

FREDERICK P. KESSLER  
State Representative  
12th Assembly District

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# Upcoming Events



## Spring BLUE BOOK EVENT



On **Saturday, May 17, from 9:00am to 11:00am**, I will be distributing the new 2007-2008 Wisconsin Blue Books and road maps. Unfortunately, I will only have a limited number of roughly 160 Blue Books. Given the limited number, Blue Books will be distributed on a first come basis. This event will be at the garage of my home, at 11221 West Sanctuary Drive. The garage opens on 113th Street. We live in the Heritage subdivision. You enter the subdivision at either 114th Street and Mill Road, or at 107th Street and Green Tree Road.

## Luther Manor LISTENING SESSION

On **Tuesday, May 20, from 2:00pm to 3:30pm**, I will be hosting a public listening session at Luther Manor. This will be a time when you, my constituents, can come and meet with me, ask questions, and give me your thoughts on issues that are important to you. The event will take place at Luther Manor's Faith and Education Center, located at 4545 North 92nd Street, in Wauwatosa. I look forward to seeing you there.

## 2007-2008 Legislative Session

The only way that this legislative session can be described is as a “do-nothing legislature.” Under the current Republican leadership, the Assembly cancelled twice as many days of regular session as it held and only met a total of twenty five times since January 2007; a record low in recent history.

I have been very disappointed that the legislature was unable to tackle several of the most crucial issues currently facing the state. First, the state was not able to pass comprehensive healthcare reform. The Senate Democrats included the Healthy Wisconsin program as part of their version of the biennial budget, however Assembly Republicans refused to negotiate on the program and it was ultimately removed. While I was pleased that the legislature was able to pass Badgercare Plus, which extends healthcare to all the children of Wisconsin, I would like to see the legislature pass comprehensive healthcare reform to make healthcare more accessible and affordable for all people in the next legislative session.

I am also disappointed that the legislature was unable to fix the funding gap in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, which unfairly burdens Milwaukee property taxpayers. The funding flaw continues to require Milwaukee taxpayers to carry the burden of paying 37.5% of the per student cost in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, as opposed to 25% of the per student cost in Milwaukee Public Schools. 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. Correcting the flaw will be my most important priority in the coming legislative session.

One of the few bills that became law this session was a proposal I authored which authorizes law enforcement and district attorneys to investigate and prosecute human trafficking crimes in Wisconsin. Human trafficking enslaves victims, usually from other countries, who are sexually exploited or conscripted as laborers through force, fraud or coercion. Last year a couple in Brookfield were convicted of a similar crime.

Another bill that became law this year involved the merger of the Elections and Ethics boards to create the Government Accountability Board to oversee state elections.

The legislature adjourned without solving many of the problems I wanted us to address. However, I am hopeful that the legislature will reconvene in special session to take up the budget deficit. After the election, I hope we will return more committed to coming up with real solutions on issues of healthcare, environmental protection, and education.



Rep. Kessler met with Clara Barton School students and teachers during their field trip to the Wisconsin State Capitol.



Rep. Kessler addressing his colleagues in the Assembly.

## Budget Adjustment

The current downturn in the national economy has led to a projected deficit in the state budget. The budget that was signed into law last October was based on the best available fiscal projections at that time. The slowing of the economy has led to a substantial funding shortfall. While the legislature has officially adjourned from regular legislative session this year, the Assembly and Senate will reconvene in a special session to address the budget deficit.

Governor Doyle has proposed a budget adjustment bill which would make \$330 million in cuts to state agencies in addition to the \$200 million in cuts that were required in the initial budget bill. The bill also allows the state to increase federal revenues for Medicaid by approving a hospital rate assessment which will secure over \$125 million over the biennium. The assessment, which is now even supported by the state's hospital association, allows the state to receive federal funds that would otherwise not be used.

In addition, the budget adjustment bill prohibits companies like Wal-Mart from using real estate investment trusts, a big-business accounting loop-hole, to avoid paying their fair share in taxes on profits generated in Wisconsin. This measure will increase Wisconsin's revenues by at least \$6 million annually, and ease the tax burden on Wisconsin families in the future.

The budget adjustment bill not only corrects the shortfall in the budget, but also maintains \$100 million in the state's emergency budget reserve.

Unfortunately, the budget adjustment bill was immediately rejected without a vote in the State Assembly. The majority Republicans instead advocated a version of the adjustment bill which relies on deep cuts to important social programs, irresponsibly pushes school aid payments into the next budget, and effectively drains the state's emergency budget reserve funds. As a result of their inaction, the state will once again be forced to wait until a budget compromise can be adopted.

I hope that the legislature and governor will work together to quickly and responsibly prioritize the needs of Wisconsin families and ensure the state's economic stability throughout the remainder of this biennial budget.

At the time of printing this newsletter we anticipate that the legislature will meet the week of May 5th to address the budget adjustment.