

LEGISLATIVE SURVEY

To help me represent you better, please take a few moments to let me know your thoughts on these issues. If more than one member of your household answers, please use different colored inks. *Thank you!*

- Do you support public financing of Supreme Court races?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Undecided
- If Roe v Wade was overturned by the Federal Courts and power to regulate abortions was returned to the states Wisconsin would have one of the most restrictive laws in the country. Would you support the repeal of Wisconsin's criminal abortion statute?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Undecided
- Do you support legislation that would allow same sex and opposite sex couples to enter into civil unions?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Undecided
- Do you support the statewide workplace smoking ban that would include most bars and restaurants?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Undecided
- Teachers who work in private schools that receive funds through the school choice program should;
 - Be licensed by the Department of Public Instruction just like public school teachers
 - Have at least a bachelors degree related to education or their topic of instruction
 - Be hired and fired based on standards established by each individual school
- In your opinion, how should the legislature prioritize the following issues? (Please number 1 to 8 [or 9 if you fill in the Other category] with 1 being the most important to you.)
 - _____ Supporting Education
 - _____ Healthcare Reform
 - _____ Crime Prevention
 - _____ Environmental Protection
 - _____ Tax Reduction
 - _____ Campaign Finance Reform
 - _____ Privacy Rights
 - _____ Economic Development
 - _____ Other
- There is currently a moratorium in Wisconsin on building nuclear power plants. Would you support legislation permitting construction of new nuclear power plants?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Undecided
- Do you support a health care reform proposal that would give your family access to the same health care benefits as state Legislators, reduce costs by putting everyone in the same purchasing pool, and require all employers and employees to participate?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Undecided
- Current state law allows multistate corporations to evade taxes simply by maintaining a PO Box in Nevada or Delaware. Do you support closing this tax loophole for corporations as Minnesota, Michigan, and Illinois have done?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Undecided

(fold)



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JON RICHARDS
 STATE REPRESENTATIVE



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Spring 2008 Legislative Report

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Rep.Richards@legis.wi.gov

Please also visit my legislative website:

www.legis.state.wi.us/assembly/asm19/news/

Dear Neighbor:

I am honored to serve you and our dynamic Milwaukee neighborhoods in the Wisconsin State Assembly. In my work in Madison, my guiding principles are to make sure that our government is working in your best interest and that your voice is heard.

As Assistant Minority Leader, I led my colleagues in working for more access to affordable health care for the middle class, protecting our city, our great schools and our lake. This legislative session we were able to accomplish much. This newsletter will highlight the work I have done on your behalf.

Please continue to stay in touch with your insights, questions, and concerns. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,



FIGHTING FOR HEALTH CARE

Richards Leads Efforts to Make Health Care More Affordable



Milwaukee and Wisconsin have some of the highest health care costs in the country. That is why making health care more affordable and more accessible to your family is a top priority for me. This legislative session we made significant gains in the debate on what a dramatic reform of our health care system in Wisconsin should look like.

I helped pass a tax credit for the money you pay on health insurance premiums, and a historic expansion of the BadgerCare program that will ensure every child in our state receives affordable health care. We also successfully lobbied for the continuation

(Left) Rep. Richards arguing for Assembly action on quality, affordable health care.

of our state's SeniorCare program until January of next year. All of these efforts will make health care a little more accessible and affordable for people in Wisconsin. I look forward to doing even more next session to help our middle class families afford the quality health insurance they deserve.

I also helped in the effort to require health insurance companies to cover treatments for autism spectrum disorder, as well as hearing aids for children under age 11. While these efforts did not pass this session, it is my hope that they will be some of the first bills we consider when we meet again in January of 2009.

Health Care Access for All Kids with BadgerCare Plus

I was proud to be part of the effort to expand BadgerCare to provide all kids in Wisconsin with health insurance. Enrollment for this new program, BadgerCare Plus, started on February 1st. Now every Wisconsin family, regardless of income, can purchase comprehensive coverage for their children. BadgerCare Plus also covers working families without children and expands coverage for farmers and pregnant women. To find out if you are eligible for BadgerCare Plus, you can visit www.access.wi.gov and click on "Am I Eligible". You can also apply online by clicking on "Apply for Benefits". Please contact my office if you are unable to access these tools online or if you need other assistance.

FIGHTING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

Richards Leads Effort to Pass Great Lakes Water Compact

For the last two years I have been a leading voice in the fight to pass the Great Lakes Water Compact. The Compact is a historic, multi-state effort that would impose restrictions on water diversions to areas outside of the Great Lakes basin and put in place essential conservation standards so that our water will be protected for generations to come. We need the Compact because current federal law protecting the lakes is too fragile. Without the Compact, we could be one judge's decision or an arbitrary act of Congress away from having our water shipped outside of the basin and to thirsty states in the southeast and southwest.

While the Compact did not pass during the legislature's regular session this year, it is likely to pass during a Special Session this Spring. The



Compact is vital to the health of our lakes and to our state and must be passed as quickly as possible. Wisconsin has to lead on this issue to ensure that we have a say in how our water will be used. I will continue to work with my colleagues to get this important document enacted by the end of the year.



Richards Fights to Make Workplace Healthier

This year I co-authored the "Breathe Free Wisconsin Act," important legislation that would ban smoking in all public places. The bill would not prohibit you from smoking in the privacy of your own home, however, and some businesses would be exempt from the ban.

This bill will not only help to keep our work places safe,

it will keep public places healthier. It will also ensure that Wisconsin does not become the ashtray of the Midwest – most of our neighboring states have already passed their own smoking bans. While this legislation failed to pass this legislative session, there is still broad support for this bill in our state and I am confident that it will be a top priority in the next legislative session.

BILLS CO-SPONSORED BY REP. RICHARDS

Health Care

AB 834/SB 150 – "Breathe Free Wisconsin Act:" Prohibits smoking in public places and places of employment.

AB 417/SB 178 – Requires health insurance companies to cover treatments for autism spectrum disorder.

Protecting our Lakes

AB 925/SB 523 – "The Great Lakes Water Compact:" Creates a system to regulate water diversions out of the Great Lakes Basin.

AB 86 – Protects our Great Lakes by placing restrictions on harmful ballast water discharge from foreign freighters.

AB 396/197 – Bans retail fertilizers that contain phosphorus in order to keep our lakes safe and clean.

Milwaukee

AB 308/SB 176 – Ends practice of paying fired police officers while their case is in the appeal process.

AB 391/SB 349 – Requires voucher schools to keep electronic transcripts for their students in the event those students want to apply for college.

Crime

AB 651 – Removes the statute of limitations on when sexual contact with a child can be reported and prosecuted.

SB 497 – Provides funding to maintain the Community Prosecutor program, an important crime fighting tool in Milwaukee.

Women's Health

AB 377 – "The Compassionate Care for Rape Victims" bill. Requires hospitals to educate rape victims on their treatment options, and dispense emergency contraception if requested.

AB 467/SB 232 – "The Birth Control Protection Act": Requires pharmacists to either dispense birth-control, or refer a patient immediately to a pharmacist who will.

Consumer Protection

AB 568/SB 298 – Prevents mortgage lending scams that prey on people going through hard financial times and ultimately lead to that homeowner being evicted.

AB 217 – Adds cell phone numbers to the state's "Do Not Call List."

Property Taxes

AB 452 – Creates "HOPE", the Homeowners Property Tax Exemption. Allows a homeowner to exempt the first \$60,000 of their home's value from property taxes, saving them more than \$500 a year on their property tax bill.

Election and Government Reform

AB 250 – Provides public financing for Supreme Court races to keep integrity and impartiality in the election process.



Rep. Richards speaking on the Assembly Floor about the importance of issues middle class families care about.

FIGHTING FOR YOU

Richards Works to Protect Your Home, Pocketbook

This session I advanced two bills aimed at helping consumers protect themselves from predatory lending practices. One of my bills would end a practice known as "equity stripping". Fly-by-night operations are seeking out individuals in Milwaukee who are in dire financial straights to offer them a seemingly affordable payment plan on

their home's mortgage. The conditions of the loan make it nearly impossible for the people to pay the money back, and if they miss a payment they can lose their home to these scam artists.

Another one of my bills would place more regulations on the pay-day lending stores you have seen popping up all over our neighborhoods. People can get into a lot of trouble with these companies when they get into a cycle of rolling over their loans from month to month, paying extremely high

interest rates, and never fully paying the loan back. These unfair lending practices must be curbed, particularly given our tough economic times.