



STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**JOSH ZEPNICK**  
WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY  
CAPITOL REPORT • SPRING 2008

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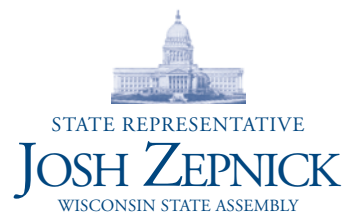
State Representative  
**Josh Zepnick**  
**Community  
Listening Session**

Wednesday, May 21st  
3:30 - 5:30 p.m.  
Wilson Park Senior Center  
(2601 W. Howard Avenue)

**Pedestrian Safety  
Improvements**  
in the  
Ninth Assembly District



Transportation Secretary Frank Busalacchi presented Representative Zepnick along with Aldemen Bob Donovan and Joe Dudzik, Greenfield Mayor Michael Nietzke, City Engineer Jeff Polenske, Ken Franzen and Greg Herker of the Jackson Park Neighborhood Association, Dorothy Seeley of United Seniors a \$400,000 Pedestrian safety Grant for the area around Manitoba Elementary and Jackson Park



Dear Neighbor:

Spring 2008

As your State Representative for the Ninth Assembly District on Milwaukee's South Side, it is my pleasure to provide you with my Spring 2008 Newsletter. In this newsletter, I have highlighted some of the important actions taken by the Legislature in the last two years as well as information about my work in the community.

In addition this newsletter contains important information about services and programs that are provided by the State of Wisconsin. You will find details about such programs as BadgerCare Plus, the Wisconsin Covenant, and Wisconsin's own prescription drug program for seniors, SeniorCare.

When the Legislature has not been in session over the last two years I have spent the majority of my time trying to meet and speak with as many of you, my constituents, as I possibly could. I have attended community events, marched in parades, visited schools, and talked with many of you right at your doorstep throughout the year.

Democracy is not a spectator sport and one of the most fulfilling parts of my job as a State Legislator is trying to bring the political process to the public and having citizens engaged in the work of our community. A healthy and open dialogue is the key to making government work better for everyone. That is why I encourage you to contact me with any concerns or questions about issues in state government or the community. Invite me to your church, school or civic organization or on tours of your businesses so I can get to know what is important to you in the community

I encourage my constituents to make use of two free and simple methods of contacting me at the State Capitol: by phone toll-free at **888-534-0009** or at home at **414-727-0841**; or via E-mail at: **Rep.Zepnick@legis.wi.gov**

Thank you,

Josh Zepnick

STATE CAPITOL, P.O. BOX 8953 ♦ MADISON, WI 53708 ♦ (608) 266-1707  
FAX: (608) 282-3609 ♦ TOLL-FREE: 1-888-534-0009 ♦ E-MAIL: Rep.Zepnick@legis.wi.gov

**HOW TO  
REACH ME:**



**Office:**  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708  
(608) 266-1707

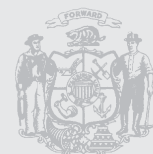
**Toll-Free:**  
888-534-0009

**E-mail:**  
Rep.Zepnick@legis.wi.gov

**Legislative Hotline:**  
(toll-free) 1-800-362-9472

**Web Address:**  
<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/assembly/asm09/news/>

**Fax:**  
(608) 282-3609



# ZEPNICK LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY



## Tougher Penalties for Graffiti

Representative Zepnick is a co-sponsor of a bill which would lower the value of damage graffiti must cause in order to be considered a crime from \$2500 to \$1000. This would serve to help clean up our streets and make them safer by cracking down on criminals who damage property before they can move on to even bigger crimes.

## Objecting to Property Tax Assessments

Under this bill, a tax levying board must grant a taxpayer a 60-day extension for a hearing before a board of review of the taxpayer's objection to a changed assessment. If the taxation district has enacted an ordinance authorizing such extensions and if the taxpayer submits a request for the extension along with the objection and payment of a \$100 fee. This ensures that homeowners have a chance to disagree with a taxing authority if they feel that they are being overtaxed.

## Commercial Drivers Licenses for Military License Holders

This bill requires DOT to waive the knowledge and driving skills tests for commercial driver license applicants who hold a federal military commercial driver license, regardless of where it was issued. This bill gives our service men and women the chance to take the skills that they received serving our country and apply them directly into jobs back at home without going through unnecessary red tape to be certified for something they are already proficient at.

## Propane Safety Act

This bill requires that a supplier who fills containers with Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) must be licensed. The bill also requires such a supplier of LPG maintain proof of insurance or other financial means to compensate third parties for bodily injury and property damage for incidents associated with the release of LPG. This legislation would help establish safer practices to avoid disasters such as the ones in Ellison Bay and at Falk Co. in Milwaukee.

## Cable TV Choice Bill

This bill replaces municipal cable franchises with a statewide system administered by the Department of Financial Institutions. This legislation will enable more video providers access to the Wisconsin market, increasing value for consumers. In addition the consumer protection aspects of this legislation strengthen the rules for video providers and improve service for Wisconsin consumers.

## Pay Day Loan Regulation

This bill authored by Rep. Zepnick, would clamp down on the predatory type practices of Pay Day loan providers. This payday lending bill would limit the amount someone could borrow at any one visit to a payday lender, restrict the number of "rollovers", and discourage turning the payday advance into a long-term loan. Most importantly the bill would prohibit the State of Wisconsin from creating a database of payday loan borrowers. Rep. Zepnick believes that this is a big brother invasion of personal privacy in a society increasingly faced with identity theft and surveillance measures.

## Child Abuse Reporting

This bill provides that there is privileged for information contained in a report of child abuse or neglect. It requires that large number of professionals, including all of the professionals for whom this is currently considered privileged information, to report possible child abuse or neglect. This bill will help protect the children of Wisconsin and remove the barriers the prosecution faces in trying of those that would harm children.

## 2007-2009 STATE BUDGET *Key Highlights...*

### **MPS – Science and Math Initiative:**

Provides \$10 million to MPS to fund teacher training and tutors to help instruct students who are struggling with math and science.

### **Tax Exclusion for Retirement Income:**

Provides an individual income tax exclusion for up to \$5,000 per person aged 65 or older for taxpayers with adjusted gross income of \$15,000 or less (\$30,000 or less for married-joint filers).

### **I-94 North-South project:**

The budget provides \$182 million in the southeast Wisconsin freeway rehabilitation program to begin preliminary work on the reconstruction of I-94 between the Mitchell Interchange and the Illinois state line. This multi-billion dollar project

will provide a significant economic boost to the region.

### **UW Milwaukee Initiative:**

Used to expand its existing research initiative, hire twenty leading faculty in targeted clusters, such as biomedical and health technologies, advanced manufacturing, and other science and engineering areas and enhance the level of graduate and undergraduate education and research.

### **Zoo Interchange:**

The budget provides \$24.0 million for preliminary work related to the construction of the Zoo Interchange. This project is desperately needed and will facilitate a more efficient flow of traffic.

### **MPS – High Poverty District Aid:**

Provides approximately \$18 million to MPS to help improve conditions in school districts a disproportionate number of students who live in poverty.





# BADGERCARE+

## Provides Health Care Coverage to:

- ◆ Children under age 19
- ◆ Pregnant women
- ◆ Parents and relatives caring for a child
- ◆ Parents with children in foster care
- ◆ Young adults leaving out of home care (such as foster care)
- ◆ Farmers and other self-employed parents

You can apply for BadgerCare Plus at [badgercareplus.org](http://badgercareplus.org), by mail, phone or in person with your local county or tribal agency. For more information, call 1-800-362-3002 or visit [badgercareplus.org](http://badgercareplus.org)

## Out of Pocket Cost:

BadgerCare Plus has two major health insurance plans. There are several limited plans which cover different services, each with different income limits. The plan you're enrolled in depends on your family's income. Some plans will have, deductibles, premiums and co-payments. You may not have to pay at all, but if you do, the amount you pay depends on your family income. You can be sure it's a good investment in your family's health.

## Southside Schools Visit the State Capitol

Students from Jeremiah Curtin Academy (left), Forest Home Elementary (below), and U.S. Grant Elementary (right) came to visit the State Capitol to learn how state government works and to see Rep. Zepnick in action.



## PAYCHECKS FOR FIRED POLICE

Ever wonder why it takes the State Capitol a long time to get it right? The major reason it took so long for this bill to become reality was the mistaken notion that a cop getting fired is the same as any other person losing their job. Being an officer in the Milwaukee Police Department is NOT the same as any other job, the risks are much greater and the possibility of losing one's life while at work is no small matter.

I have personally talked with dozens of retired and active duty MPD officers during this debate. With near unanimous results, the concern was "please help us deal with the bad apples before we all get painted with the same brush." Officers who abuse their shield have created a long-term distrust on the streets of Milwaukee that will take years for our community to make sense of. **Restoring integrity and protecting the hard-working men and women of the Milwaukee Police Department are major priorities for me.** Both kids and adults should feel not only safe but find it's in their

own interest to communicate positively with Police and other public safety employees in our city.

**Both the State Assembly and the State Senate have finally passed legislation that prohibits fired police officers who have been charged with crimes from collecting pay. This bill allows these fired officers to receive back pay only if they are cleared of all the charges against them.**

As we saw in the Frank Jude Jr. case, delays and appeals resulted in a cost to Milwaukee taxpayers of nearly \$475, 000. Money like this would be better spent fixing potholes or improving recruitment and hiring practices that would rebuild police-community relationships.

Welcome to Milwaukee Chief Flynn! We wish you many years of success. And as much as our community has pent-up demand for your leadership, WE are all the hope we've been waiting for...without public support of MPD

and stronger neighborhoods, our city's progress will not be realized.



**Governor Jim Doyle (right) is joined by State Senator Spencer Coggs (left) and Michael Miller and Marty Collins of the City of Milwaukee as he prepares to sign Representative Josh Zepnick's AB 525 into law. AB 525 protects city inspectors who are often victims of crime while inspecting properties in the city of Milwaukee and throughout Wisconsin.**

## IN THE COMMUNITY...



**Representative Zepnick and Governor Jim Doyle (center) joined Charles Vang (right) and Alderman Bob Donovan (left) to mark the Anniversary of Vang Insurance on National Avenue in the Silver City Neighborhood.**



**Rep. Zepnick is joined by Charlotte John-Gomez from the Layton Boulevard West Neighbors Assoc. and Greg Gracz from Firefighters Local 215 at a press conference discussing the Falk explosion tragedy.**



**Rep. Zepnick (center) participated in the Milwaukee Mass Portrait in July in the Menomonee Valley Community Park. Nearly 800 people gathered to mark the renewal of the Menomonee valley and to celebrate the diversity of modern Milwaukee.**

# WisconsinEye Covers the Legislature



In May 2007, the WisconsinEye Network was launched to let citizens watch the State Legislature in action. WisconsinEye is a private, not-for-profit statewide public affairs network whose mission is to provide independent, nonpartisan coverage of civic and community life in Wisconsin, beginning with gavel-to-gavel coverage of the actions of state government in Madison.

The network's state-of-the-art digital broadcast production facilities include 70 camera positions in the State Capitol

building, including the Executive branch and State Supreme Court, and a network operations center at 122 West Washington Ave.

The WisconsinEye 24/7 cable channel is available to Time Warner Cable Wisconsin digital subscribers on Channel 163 or on the web at: [www.wiseye.org](http://www.wiseye.org).



## Wisconsin Covenant Aids Access to Higher Ed

The Wisconsin Covenant Pledge encourages students to set goals prior to high school so they can prepare themselves for higher education. The Office of the Wisconsin Covenant and the Wisconsin higher education community will provide students with information about resources available to them. These students also will hear about options available to them on college campuses during high school. Students who successfully meet all aspects of the pledge will be recognized as Wisconsin Covenant Scholars.

Wisconsin Covenant Scholars can expect to have a place at a Wisconsin post-secondary institution and financial assistance if their family needs it. Students who are recognized as scholars will also be eligible for need-based Wisconsin Covenant Grants

from the Wisconsin Covenant Foundation.

In order to participate in the Wisconsin Covenant, answer the following questions:

- ✓ Are you currently in the 8th grade?
- ✓ Are you a Wisconsin resident and do you attend school in Wisconsin?
- ✓ Do you plan to graduate from a Wisconsin high school?
- ✓ Are you thinking about going to school after high school?
- ✓ Are you willing to work hard and do your best while you're in high school?

If you answered yes to all of these questions, then you are eligible for this program. You can request a copy of the Wisconsin Covenant Pledge by calling 608-267-9389 or e-mailing [wisconsin covenant@wi.gov](mailto:wisconsin covenant@wi.gov). Once they receive your request they will mail you the materials you need.

## State of Wisconsin Services That Can Help You and Your Family

**BadgerCare** provides health insurance to low-income working families with children who are uninsured or who don't have access to health insurance. For more information, visit [www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/badgercare](http://www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/badgercare) or call 1-800-362-3002.



**BadgerRx Gold** brings affordable drugs to the uninsured and underinsured. It has no age requirement or screening for pre-existing health conditions. For more information, visit [www.badgerrxgold.com](http://www.badgerrxgold.com) or call 866-809-9382.

**SeniorCare** is Wisconsin's prescription drug program for residents age 65 or older who have limited income and need help paying for their medications. For more information, visit [www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/seniorcare](http://www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/seniorcare) or call 1-800-657-2038.



**Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA)**, through the Veterans Trust Fund, provides education assistance, loans, need-based grants, long-term health care, assistance in applying for federal veterans benefits, and numerous other services to eligible Wisconsin veterans, deployed service members, and their families. To learn more or to apply, contact your County Veterans Service Officer, visit [www.dva.state.wi.us](http://www.dva.state.wi.us), or call WDVA toll-free at 1-800-WIS-VETS (1-800-947-8387).

**State Government Fraud Hotline** is a new hotline for the public to report incidents of fraud, waste and mismanagement in state government. This 24-hour hotline will be staffed by the non partisan Legislative Audit Bureau and the identity of callers will be kept confidential. The toll free fraud hotline number can be reached at 1-877-372-8317.

### Free for the asking...

Each year, the State of Wisconsin creates a variety of written resources that are free to the citizens of Wisconsin. If you are interested in any of the listed resources, please mail this slip to my office or e-mail me at [Rep.Zepnick@legis.wi.gov](mailto:Rep.Zepnick@legis.wi.gov) or call me at (608) 266-1707. Your response should include your name, address, phone number, and requested materials. Please make your requests before May 25th, because distribution is limited.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wisconsin State Highway Map               | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing Home visit Check List                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer's Guide to Insurance             | <input type="checkbox"/> Power of Attorney / "Living Will"              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer's Guide to Auto Insurance        | <input type="checkbox"/> Spousal Impoverishment Protection in Wisconsin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wisconsin Consumer Guide to Nursing Homes | <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding Medical Bills                    |

### Rank your Representatives!

Please circle the number that best matches how good or not so good of job performance for your elected officials:

	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	Excellent		Satisfactory		Don't know who this is		Don't care		Unsatisfactory	
President Bush	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
US Senator Russ Feingold	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
US Senator Herb Kohl	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Congresswoman Gwen Moore	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Governor Jim Doyle	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
State Senator Tim Carpenter	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
State Representative Josh Zepnick	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Mayor Tom Barrett	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
County Executive Scott Walker	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1