

Representative **GARY  
TAUCHEN**

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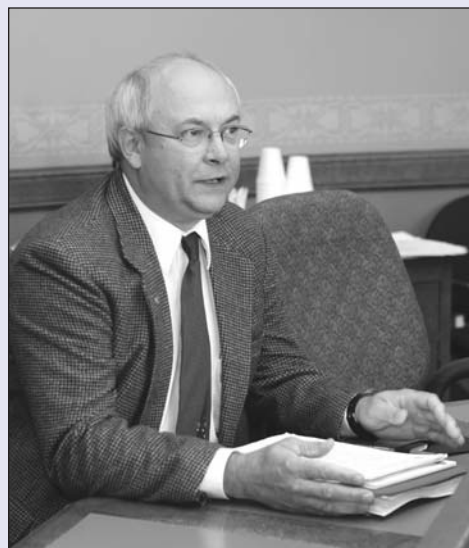
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Gary with a school group from Navarino Elementary School.

## ASSEMBLY PASSES REAL-WORLD HEALTH CARE REFORM



Representative Tauchen testifies before the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice on a bill he authored that would stiffen penalties for sex offenders.

Rising health care costs are one of the biggest concerns for families throughout Wisconsin. While there are no easy answers to this complicated and growing problem, there are, however, real-world reforms that will make an impact on the cost and quality of health care in our state. The focus of our health care agenda is to put health care decisions and dollars back in your hands.

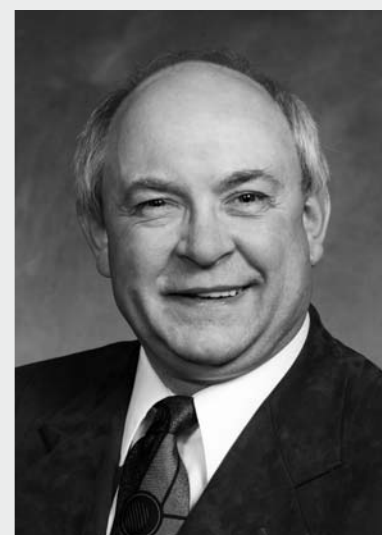
**SeniorCare**— Assembly Republicans worked with the Governor and legislators on both sides of the aisle – in Madison as well as in Washington, D.C. – to extend this popular program that serves more than 107,000 Wisconsin residents, helping low income senior citizens afford the prescription drugs they need.

**BadgerCare Plus**— This new program will expand the existing BadgerCare program to offer comprehensive, affordable health care to all uninsured children. In addition, business owners, farmers and pregnant women may also qualify for the program. For more information on BadgerCare Plus, go to [www.badgercareplus.org](http://www.badgercareplus.org) or call 1-800-362-3002.

**e-Healthcare Quality Act**—The Assembly also voted to improve the quality and safety of health care. Senate Bill 487, the eHealth Care Quality Act, passed the Assembly on a unanimous vote and was signed into law by the Governor on March 17th. This legislation removes a number of barriers currently standing in the way of doctors' ability to access a patient's lifesaving medical history.

# 2008 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

# Representative GARY TAUCHEN



### KEEP IN TOUCH WITH GARY!

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### COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Committee on Rural Affairs  
Committee on State Affairs  
Committee on Agriculture  
Committee on Biofuels and  
Sustainable Energy

### From the desk of Gary Tauchen

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

When I ran for the Wisconsin State Assembly two years ago, there were four main areas I wanted to concentrate on to make state government work for you. Those areas were agriculture, education, health care affordability and economic development. I'd like to use this newsletter to let you know what happened in those areas this past legislative session.

We got off to a good start this session by reforming the way Madison does business. The first bill I voted for was a comprehensive ethics and elections reform bill. The bill created a new non-partisan Government Accountability Board that will have the authority to investigate criminal and civil violations of the state's ethics, campaign finance and elections laws.

We also passed a new state budget that taxpayers can afford. We held down government spending and funded our priorities. The Legislature provided a record increase in state aid to local school districts, improved access to affordable health care and gave much-needed tax relief to families, seniors and small businesses.

Since January, my Assembly colleagues and I have been working with Governor Doyle to jump-start the state's economy. We are making progress, but we have a ways to go.

We are now working to close a budget shortfall resulting from the state's economic slowdown. Just like area families do when times are tough, our plan cuts government spending and dips into the state's rainy day account. Most importantly, the Assembly's plan does not raise your taxes.

Serving you continues to be an honor and privilege. I do appreciate hearing from you. Please contact me by calling toll-free (888) 529-0006 or by e-mail at [Rep.Tauchen@legis.wi.gov](mailto:Rep.Tauchen@legis.wi.gov).

If you would like to receive more frequent updates, please consider adding your name to my electronic newsletter list by emailing me at [Rep.Tauchen@legis.wi.gov](mailto:Rep.Tauchen@legis.wi.gov) and indicating that you would like to receive my email newsletter updates.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve you in the State Assembly.

Warm Regards,

**Gary Tauchen**  
State Representative  
6th Assembly District

# GARY TAUCHEN: *Real World Issues... Real World Solutions*

## AGRICULTURAL UPDATE

Agriculture is Wisconsin's #1 industry. It generates \$51.5 billion in economic activity and provides 12% of jobs in the state. Agriculture not only defines our heritage, but will shape our future as well.

2007 was a great year for Wisconsin agriculture, with farmer's net farm income more than doubling from 2006. Net farm income rose from \$1.1 billion in 2006 to \$2.6 billion in 2007.

The farm balance sheet is also showing strength. The December 2006 balance sheet shows farm assets of \$61.6 billion and a debt of \$8.1 billion for a Wisconsin farm net worth of \$53.5 billion.

While we expect the economy to slow in 2008, Wisconsin agriculture is the shining star in the 2008 economic outlook.

There are, in fact, many examples of great things happening in agriculture.

- Milk production increased 9% between 2004 and 2007 and is at a 17 year high.
- Wisconsin set a new record in 2006 for cheese production and accounts for 26% of the national market.

- Dairy exports increased by more than 100% in the first 9 months of 2007 compared to the same period in 2006, leading to a new record.
- Dairy farmers have invested \$1 billion in modernizations in the past 5 years and plan another \$1 billion investment in the next 5 years.
- Dairy processors have invested \$500 million modernizing their plants in the last 3 years, when 23 new plants were opened and 45 plants expanded.

These examples highlight the focused effort of industry and government to re-invigorate the agricultural industry. The livestock siting legislation, expansion of the use-value tax, and the dairy investment tax credit, among others helped build momentum, which we must continue.

Developing the Wisconsin 2007-08 biennium budget was very difficult. Still, Wisconsin agriculture did well. We were able to provide \$6.5 million in nutrient management funding, \$250,000 to the Discovery Farm Program, \$12 million in non-point bonding for cost share grants,



Gary attends a meeting of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture.

a \$4 million grant for a soybean crushing facility in Evansville, a \$150,000 increase to county fair aids, a biofuels tax credit, a E85 biodiesel fuel pump tax credit, a \$700,000 per year dairy manufacturer tax credit, and were able to eliminate adding depreciation to determine eligibility for BadgerCare.

Because of changes in the tax law, many farmers can now qualify to participate in BadgerCare Plus. This will be a benefit to families with uninsured children. Call 1-800-362-3002 for more information and to find out if you qualify.

## GREAT LAKES WATER COMPACT

As of this writing, the Great Lakes Water Resources Compact is due to soon come to the floor of the Legislature for a vote on ratification. The Compact is an agreement between the eight Great Lakes Governors and the Premiers of the Canadian Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The compact regulates how the states and provinces will manage, protect, and use water from the Great Lakes water basin. The Compact is very important to protect one of our greatest natural resources.

The Compact is the result of negotiations between legislative leaders and the Governor. As they negotiated I firmly

believed that Wisconsin needed to pass a strong Compact, and I am glad to say we negotiated an agreement that takes care of Wisconsin's water needs and prevents faraway states like Arizona or Georgia from "sticking a straw" into the Lakes and siphoning water out of them.

We have a responsibility to protect the water of the Great Lakes for future generations in Wisconsin. From recreation to tourism to shipping and industry, our state is defined by its place next to the Great Lakes. With legislative approval of this Compact we are providing for today's needs as well as tomorrow's.

## INVESTING IN EDUCATION

**School Aids, Our State's Top Funding Priority**—Over the current biennium, Wisconsin classrooms will see the largest increase in funding in our state's history, totaling more than \$12.3 billion in state aid.

**More Aid for Special Needs Students**—Our special needs students need extra help in school. With bipartisan support, local school districts will receive an extra \$53 million in special education aid from the state.

**Getting Kids to School**—With gas running at more than \$3 a gallon, local school districts are feeling the pinch transporting kids to and from school. Through the state budget, we increased the state reimbursement rate for local school busing costs, so local school

districts can put more money in the classroom.

**Technical Colleges: Retooling Our Workforce**—As our economy changes our communities are increasingly coming to depend more on technical schools. Working in a bipartisan fashion, the legislature provided technical colleges with an additional \$3 million to fund skills training or other education-related needs of local businesses.

**UW Growth Initiative Funding**—The Assembly Republican budget proposed to fund the UW System's "Growth Agenda for Wisconsin," which is aimed at increasing the number of Wisconsinites with four year degrees, attracting more college graduates to Wisconsin, and creating new "knowledge-economy" jobs.



Representative Tauchen speaks on the floor of the State Assembly.

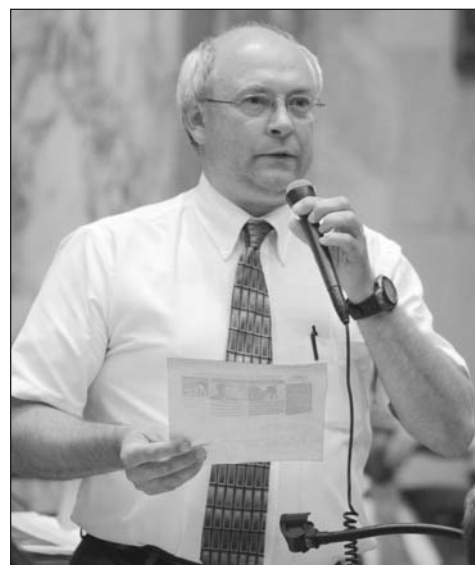
## POCKETBOOK SAVINGS FOR FAMILIES & SENIORS

**Retirement Income Tax Cut**—Making Wisconsin the best place in the nation to retire is an ongoing challenge. Next year, senior couples with incomes less than \$30,000 will be able to exempt \$5,000 of retirement/pension income from their state taxes.

**Making a College Education More Affordable**—To help parents offset the costs of putting their children through college, we expanded the income tax deduction on college tuition to include mandatory student fees and increased the maximum deduction to \$6,000.

**Holding the Line on Property Taxes**—Many local homeowners, particularly seniors, are already paying too much in property taxes. Working together, we renewed the Property Tax Freeze for another two years to help keep local property taxes in check.

**Health Care Premium Tax Deduction**—Beginning in tax year 2008, individuals who receive their health insurance through an employer, but are required to pay a portion of the premium, will be able to deduct those costs from their state income tax. When fully implemented, this new tax deduction will keep an extra \$150 million per year in the pockets of Wisconsin families.



Representative Tauchen on the Assembly floor during debate on the 2007-09 state budget.



Representative Tauchen with his family after signing the Oath of Office Book on Inauguration Day. The book dates back to 1877 and has been used for all inaugurations since then. It still contains all of its original pages.

(left to right: Gary's father Herbert, mother Marlys, Gary, Gary's sister Catherine, and his sister Debbie)