



Wisconsin State Senate
RANDY HOPPER
Senator - 18th District

April 6, 2011

Dear [REDACTED]

As you are aware, Wisconsin has yet to fully recover from the economic recession that hit in 2008. With gas prices creeping up every day and other expenses on the rise - any work I can do to bring fiscal sanity back to the state will be beneficial to all our citizens, especially those on fixed incomes.

I realize rising property taxes have an inordinate impact on seniors. I am pleased to report that the proposed 2011-13 biennial budget bill provides a property tax freeze on local governments and the Technical College System. Revenue limits on school districts are also being tightened, to ensure that state aid reductions won't be passed along to you.

You may have also heard the proposed budget includes some changes to SeniorCare, the program that provides seniors access to affordable prescription drugs. Senator Alberta Darling and I believe the adjustments could have negative impacts on the participants in the program so we have stated publicly that we do not agree with the current proposal and will advocate maintaining current law as it relates to SeniorCare.

I am pleased to be a co-author of Senate Bill 29, a bill that is meant to provide meaningful tax relief to seniors in Wisconsin. Four years ago, Wisconsin created a \$5,000 tax exemption for retirement income earned by a very limited number of Wisconsin seniors that meet strict eligibility criteria. Senate Bill 29 expands this benefit to all of Wisconsin seniors, while also phasing in a larger tax exemption. Once fully implemented the first \$20,000 of retirement income earned by individuals would be tax free.

In addition to working on these issues, I am very encouraged by all that we are accomplishing to create jobs, cut excessive government spending and waste, and grow Wisconsin's economy.

As the **Chairman of the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Veterans and Military Affairs** and as a member of the Joint Committee on Finance I have a unique opportunity to review legislation that affects job creation in this state while keeping a close eye on government expenditures. I take into both roles the same philosophy - without a prosperous private sector tax base, government cannot function.

With that in mind here are some of the measures I have supported so far this session:

- Developing a Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation that will partner with businesses of all sizes to create jobs
- Limiting the ability for unelected bureaucrats to impose onerous rules and regulations on property owners and businesses
- Passing tougher restrictions on frivolous lawsuits
- Providing tax credits to small businesses to hire new workers
- Offering out-of-state companies incentives to relocate and grow jobs in Wisconsin
- Passing health care legislation that will make it more affordable for businesses to offer health care

I believe these are steps that signal to job creators here - and all over the country - that Wisconsin is serious about making the changes necessary for companies to be successful, even in this uncertain economy.

My next challenge, along with my colleagues in the legislature, is to balance the \$3.6 billion deficit in Wisconsin's state budget. Governor Walker introduced his proposal in early March and the Joint Committee on Finance has now started to review his plan. In my role on the committee I will advocate for reducing waste, fraud, and abuse in state spending, fight for a long-term balanced budget solution, and in the end vote for a budget that doesn't increase taxes.

Keeping those goals in mind there are many different provisions in the budget bill that can be modified. It is my hope that you will communicate with me throughout the budget review process to share your opinions and concerns.

You can do that a variety of ways:

- Call my office at 1-888-736-8729
- Send me a letter to Senator Randy Hopper, P.O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707
- E-mail me at sen.hopper@legis.wis.gov
- Fill out our survey online at <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/sen18news>

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to update you on my first three months of the 2011-2012 legislative session and I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,


Randy Hopper
Senator
18th Senate District

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