



HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

Capitol Update

By Senator Howard Marklein

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Legislature's Budget Invests in the People of Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Legislature has completed our work on the State Budget. I am proud to say that our version of the state budget invests in the people of Wisconsin and the needs of our communities while protecting taxpayers. It is especially helpful for rural Wisconsin and I have worked hard to make sure the rural voice was heard in this discussion. Rural Wisconsin matters.

Once the legislature passes this bill, the Governor will consider his options. He can sign the bill, veto parts of the bill or veto all of the bill. No matter where you stand politically, I hope you will review what our bill does and evaluate it for yourself.

Our budget funds your priorities. We put a lot of money into the things you told us to fund – roads, healthcare, education and more. We did not cut anything.

If the Governor vetoes our budget, we will not be back with another version. This document is a compromise and it meets your demands for investments in roads, healthcare and education. Many of you have encouraged us to compromise and work together – this budget does that.

We also included a Middle Class Tax Cut for Working Families. While every taxpayer will receive a cut as their income passes through the first two tax brackets, 89% of the people who will most benefit from the tax cut make less than \$150,000 per year. This tax cut is made with existing resources that resulted from eight years of positive reforms. You earned it!

Again, the Legislature's budget invests in you, your needs and the needs of your neighbors. We heard you. We responded. We invested.

Please take a look at the following summary that reflects the highlights I believe are most important to the people of the 17th Senate District:

Transportation - Nearly \$1 billion investment in roads by 2021.

- \$156 million more for local roads with \$90 million in one-time funding for the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) and investments in General Transportation Aids (GTAs).
- \$320 million more for State Highway Rehabilitation.

- Raised Vehicle Registration Fee by \$10 and Title Fee by \$95 rather than increasing the gas tax because they are sustainable and reasonable ways to increase revenue while we make reforms to the way the Department of Transportation (DOT) conducts road work.

Healthcare - \$1.6 billion for healthcare access and care for those who need it most.

- Nursing Home Reimbursement Rates – we increased funding by \$30 million over the biennium. This is a 6% increase. We also increased the acuity rate as part of the Medical Assistance cost to continue by 1%. The Governor increased these items by \$10.7 million.
- Personal Care Worker Rates – we increased funding for personal care workers by \$37 million over the biennium. We increased the current hourly rate from \$16.73 per hour to \$18.24 starting July 1, 2019. The Governor increased personal care rates \$7 million over the biennium.
- Direct Caregivers in Family Care – we increased funding by \$27 million over the biennium. The Governor’s budget had a \$12 million increase. We have more than doubled the base funding for the direct care workforce.
- Children & Family Aids – We dramatically increased funding for these programs by \$30.5 million. These dollars support our counties and social workers who are facing incredible challenges caring for children of families in crisis.
- Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) funding – We increased funding for qualifying hospitals by \$74 million over the biennium. We also increased the maximum payment from \$4.6 million to \$9.6 million to meet increasing needs.
- Rural Critical Care Hospital Supplement – We increased funding by \$5 million over the biennium and changed the definition to expand the program to more hospitals. In the 17th District, these increases will benefit Gunderson Boscobel Area Hospital and Clinic and Memorial Hospital of Lafayette County.

K-12 Education - \$500 million more for schools.

- Total school spending \$12.3 billion in the next biennium.
- Responded to the top three requests from school districts statewide:
 1. Increase per pupil aid – we increased per pupil funding by \$200 and \$204 over the next four years - \$640 total.
 2. Increase special education funding – we increased special education funding by nearly \$100 million – will cover 30% of costs by 2021.
 3. Ensure funding provided can be counted on for years to come – done.
- Directed more funding through the Equalization Aids formula, which helps poor, rural schools.
- Raised the low-revenue limit adjustment for low-spending school districts and funded the increase in order to relieve the property tax burden.
- Doubled the current funding for student mental health programs.

Rural Broadband Expansion - \$44 million to expand rural broadband in our communities.

- The biggest investment Wisconsin has made in broadband expansion to date.
- More funding into each year of the biennium than in the total awarded since the program started in 2014.

University of Wisconsin System - \$100 million more and \$1 billion for capital projects.

- The legislature added \$57.7 million to the UW's \$6.35 billion budget.
- Allocated \$1 billion for capital projects to renovate and maintain existing buildings.
- Froze tuition for the fourth budget in a row – savings for students and families.

Corrections – Well-deserved pay raises for Correctional Staff and \$162.6 million more.

- Approximately \$2 more per hour starting January 1, 2020.
- Boost entry-level pay.
- Years-of-service awards for 10, 15, 20 and 25+ years of service.

Water – Grants and staff to improve Water Quality in Wisconsin.

- \$1 mil for Producer-led Watershed grants that have been very successful in the 17th.
- \$475,000 for grants for County Conservation Staff.
- \$4 million for sediment clean-up bonding.
- \$6.5 million for rural nonpoint source water pollution abatement grants.
- \$400,000 for the Well Compensation Program to help low income individuals replace, reconstruct or treat contaminated water supplies.
- \$4 million for dam safety grants
- Additional Environmental Management positions for water quality.
- Four new positions at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) permitting office to help farmers improve water quality on their farms.

Agriculture - \$8.8 million for Dairy Innovation Hub and Agency Support Staff for Ag needs.

- Dairy Innovation Hub – We invested \$8.8 million in the Dairy Task Force 2.0's #1 priority. The UW will design the program and bring it back to us for approval.
- Industrial Hemp – we created three positions at DATCP to regulate and support this emerging ag-industry.
- Farmer Mental Health – we invested \$200,000 for DATCP to design a farmer mental health program.
- Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grant – added \$200,000 to the grant program.
- County Fair Aids – added \$25,000 to bring County Fair Aids to \$456,000.
- CAFO permitting staff – four new positions at DNR for the CAFO permitting office.

Natural Resources - Added scientists, increases to the areas that matter most and support for environmental protection.

- Reauthorized the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund for two years.
- No increases for hunting and fishing licenses.
- Created first automatic renewal for hunting, fishing and trapping licenses.
- Resources to fix state trails, especially the Elroy-Sparta and 400 Trails that were damaged in last fall's flooding.
- Research on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD).

For more information and to connect with me, visit my website <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/17/marklein> and subscribe to my weekly E-Update by sending an email to Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov. Do not hesitate to call 800-978-8008 if you have any questions or need assistance with any state-related matters.