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THROUGH THE LENS



Taylor smiles as SB 161 is signed into law.



Taylor at press conference on mortgage mediation.

4th Senate District LEGISLATIVE UPDATE SENATOR LENA C. TAYLOR

WEEK OF JUNE 01 — JUNE 05

Welcome to my Legislative Update!

I'm State Senator Lena C. Taylor and this is my legislative update. If you do not wish to receive my weekly update, please let me know at sen.taylor@legis.wisconsin.gov.

-Criminal Penalties Sets the Pace-

On Thursday, June 04, the Joint Review Committee on Criminal Penalties met for the second time since its inception. The committee reports on costs or savings, consistencies or duplications in penalties and statutes, and suggests any alternatives.

The topic of the day was OWI. It was an informational hearing which consisted of invited speakers only. The hearing was held to give the committee members a chance to become better educated with the fiscal effects of the introduced policy items.

Representatives from Department of Corrections, Department of Transportation, Department of Justice, Supreme Courts, and the Public Defender's office were on-hand to testify and answer the committee's questions.

The committee will continue to review OWI issues in this manner to ensure that only the most responsibly effective penalties are allowed.

-Wisconsin Women in Government-

The Wisconsin Women in Government's 22nd Annual Scholarship Recognition Banquet on May 21st, 2009 was a great success. The annual dinner is one of the most celebrated bipartisan political events in Wisconsin. More than 1,000 state and local elected officials, business leaders, public servants, and political enthusiasts were in attendance.

Veteran democratic political strategist and commentator Donna Brazile spoke with passion about her experiences as a goal-driven woman. It was truly amazing to see such a successful woman speak about women in government. I am sure many women left the banquet that night with a new zest for life and goals to reach for more.

-Legislature Takes on Campaign Finance Reform-

Recently, the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Corrections, Insurance, Campaign Finance Reform, and Housing met jointly with the Assembly Committee on Elections and Campaign Reform to take testimony on SB 40 — the Impartial Justice Bill and SB 43, a bill to regulate special interest ads in elections.

Over the past years, nasty politics have invaded the supreme court elections in Wisconsin. The Impartial Justice Bill will provide for publicly funded supreme court campaigns and eliminate outside influences on that election process. SB 43 will regulate and require disclosure of the parties that pay for special interest ads in elections.

The committees met jointly in Eau Claire and Madison at the same time via teleconference.

MANNERS MOMENT



Dana World-Patterson
Visions Etiquette Training
visionsetiquettetraining.com

“Tiger Woods isn't a great golfer because he understands the rules of golfing; he is great because he practices and internalizes the game to the point he knows instinctively what to do in any situation on the golf course. For manners to become truly useful, they must first be learned, then practiced, and finally become automatic.”

FROM THE BAR

Every week, I will be featuring a topic of interest to you about the law from a local lawyer.

I call this “From the Bar”. This is in reference to the term “bar” which indicates the legal field.

“Bar” is derived from the old English custom of new lawyer crossing a railing area in a courtroom when they are admitted to practice.

Be sure to watch this are for exciting information!

-Finance Committee Wraps-up Budget Work-

The Joint Committee on Finance wrapped up its work on the state biennial budget early Friday morning, the 29th of May. The committee was faced with a daunting task of meeting a 7 billion hole in the budget — a hole that grew by 1.6 billion dollars in the middle of our work. Despite these pressures, the committee made tough decisions and sent the bill to the full Legislature prior to June — the historical benchmark for such actions.

Being in a leadership role in tough economic times is never fun. There were many tough decisions that we, as a committee had to make. Cuts and furloughs of state employees reached deep into the state budget. In addition, many of our favorite tax credits and exemptions had to be delayed to fill the whole this economy has brought us. The committee took many long days and nights to deliberate and bring about an achievable budget.

The budget now goes onto the full Legislature for its approval and then to the Governor. The Assembly will vote first, followed by the Senate. We'll keep you informed!

-Justice Reinvestment Priorities Drafted in Budget!-

Creating the new state budget included a major win for advocates of corrections reform as initiatives recommended by the Justice Reinvestment project were included in the committee version of the budget. This means that our recommendations for risk reduction sentences, caps on extended supervision, limits on time of revocation, and funding for community services.

Other states, like Kansas and Texas, have shown us the way on how to save millions. Texas alone saved over 200 million one year and halted construction on two new prisons. In Wisconsin, if we do nothing to change our course, we will spend over 2.5 billion dollars in the next ten years. But with the addition of these reforms we will be saving all of that and preventing the need for new prisons.

The addition of these initiatives will help to add to savings that Wisconsin can create and also save precious human capital.

-Blue-Ribbon Commission on MPS-

The Milwaukee Public School System has battled great scrutiny for many years. So much so that Governor Jim Doyle commissioned a study to be conducted by the McKinsey & Co. Consulting firm. The finding of this study were shocking to say the least, but a realistic look into the purchasing and spending model of MPS.

On Tuesday, May 12, the MPS School Board held a special meeting. In attendance were Mayor Tom Barrett, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Administration Michael Morgan in attendance on behalf of the Governor, Superintendent Andrekopoulos and eight of the nine Directors of the MPS School Board.

There was an obvious defense of the findings of the report by the School Board Directors, but within all of the campaign speeches and grandstanding there was one point that was very clear, MPS is on a four-year life support system, and if they don't make some drastic decisions soon, the bottom will certainly fallout, and there will ultimately be no public school system as we know it in Milwaukee.

When it was all said and done, each of the representatives agreed that collaboration is necessary and that the education of our children in the city of Milwaukee is the priority. How they get there is yet to be seen, but it was promising to see each jurisdiction agree on this one thing.

For more information on the McKinsey & Co. report visit <http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/router.asp?docid=306>.

INTERN SPOTLIGHT



Jenny Dresselhaus

I started interning with Senator Taylor in January and will continue working into the summer. This past week, has been pretty hectic as the Senator and other members of the Joint Committee on Finance try to resolve matters related to the state budget. There are people in and out of the office all the time and the phone is constantly ringing. I am working on responding to constituent issues, especially those related to the Department of Corrections and the prison system because Senator Taylor is the Chairperson of the Committee on Judiciary and Corrections. I enjoy learning about the issues that concern Wisconsin residents and helping constituents resolve problems.

PASTOR'S PULPIT

Faith consists in being vitally concerned with that ultimate reality to which I give the symbolical name of God. Whoever reflects earnestly on the meaning of life is on the verge of an act of faith.

-Paul Tillich

(Pastor's pulpit is a weekly message from local pastors.)

-Volunteering Is A Part Of Life-

No matter the age of your children, volunteering together as a family is a great way to spend quality time together while also shaping your child's character. And it doesn't have to take a lot of time. There are hundreds of ways to volunteer together as a family, ranging from quick projects to ongoing volunteer commitments.

How do you get started? Start with simple, short projects until you find a volunteer project that the entire family enjoys. Identify activities that your family might be interested in and try them once before making a long term commitment to a service project. A great idea is to start with organizations or your children's school that may already have an established "Day of Service". The National Family Volunteer Day is recognized annually on the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

There are hundreds of volunteer opportunities in our community. Just ask at your church, children's school, community center, or at work. Many employers encourage their employees to give back to their community. Some companies even offer employees a day off to volunteer! Volunteering is a fun way to get to know people in your community.

Volunteering in the community is also a great learning experience for the entire family. Don't forget to talk about your volunteer experience as a family. It's important to remind your family that your volunteering is making a difference in the community!

-Team Taylor's Office Always Full-

The office is full almost every day here in Team Taylor's office. Every Semester we have about 16 interns and usually less during the summers. This Summer we have a large number of interns and they are all eager to get into the business of politics. In the photograph pictured to the right, you can see staff and interns working diligently together.



We encourage our volunteers to explore their interests and reach out to make connections within the professional atmosphere of the building. This internship provides a great opportunity for both the student and our office. Most of the individuals that have worked with my staff end up returning for another semester because they enjoyed it so much. If you would like to be a part of this team as a volunteer, please contact Jenisse Volpintesta at 414-342-7176 or at sen.taylor@legis.wiscosin.gov

-Happenings Under The Dome-

This past week has been filled with intrigue; the kind that Alfred Hitchcock movies are made off. The Joint Finance Committee executive sessions that had been scheduled to convene through the week were postponed until an accord between the Governor and lawmakers was reached on the Governor's proposal to close the state's budget deficit. According to the new plan, the state would cut almost \$670 million from state agencies, shared revenue and other direct aid, pull more money from the hospital assessment and use money from a cell phone surcharge to help fix the gap.

My mortgage mediation proposal got another boost with the announcement of changes to the Making Home Affordable program that was introduced by President Obama. The enhancements to the foreclosure prevention program include incentives to facilitate deeds-in-lieu, short sales and more tenable loan modifications in areas where home values have declined. With these changes, lenders will be compelled to modify loans before they go into default and ultimately foreclosure.

On another note, the Judicial Council convened in the State Capitol on Friday. The agenda was full but one of the highlights was the announcement that the Appellate Procedure Bills have been referred for scheduling in the Senate. The changes eliminate unnecessary procedures in circuit and appellate courts, and make appellate procedure more uniform, without sacrificing any substantive rights.

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Community Events

Gwen Moore/US Post Office Passport Fair

What: An opportunity to take care of all your passport needs. You will be able to get your passport on-site.

When: Saturday, May 30, 2009
10:00am-2:00pm

Where: Ascension Lutheran Church
1236 S. Layton Blvd.
Milwaukee, WI 53215

Lombardi Walk/Run For Cancer

What: Walk/Run to raise money to help fight cancer

When: Saturday, June 13th

Where: Milwaukee County Zoo

For info: <http://www.lombardiclassic.com/events/walk-for-cancer/default.asp>

If an organization you belong to has an event you feel should be included in the Community Events section please [e-mail](mailto:eric.peterson@legis.wisconsin.gov) me.

Do you have a computer? **Do you need help with food, prescriptions, or other services?** Use www.access.wi.gov to see if you and your family are eligible for a variety of state-sponsored services designed to assist citizens in procuring essential resources.

Useful Resources

Child Support Enforcement
414-278-5160

Elderlink
414-289-6874

Governor Doyle
414-227-4344

Employment Ways to Work Program
414-906-2820

Senior Care Insurance
1-800-657-208

Senior Law
(414) 278-1222
(414) 278-7722

Energy Assistance
414-906-2800

Rent Assistance
414-286-5678

Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups Prescription Drug Assistance
1-866-456-8211

Food Assistance
414-733-0211

Bureau of Child Welfare
414-220-SAFE

W-2
1-800-722-2295

City of Wauwatosa
414-479-8900

GED Program
414-264-6888

Milwaukee Common Council
414-286-2221

City of Glendale
414-228-1700

Badger Care Insurance
1-800-362-3002

Congresswoman Gwen Moore
414-297-1140

SENATE CONTACTS
Sergeant-at-Arms Office
608-266-1801

Milwaukee County Economic Support
414-289-6000

Senator Russ Feingold
414-276-7282

Human Resources
608-264-8471

Wisconsin Foreclosure Hotline
414-278-1240
Medicaid
1-800-291-2002

Senator Herb Kohl
414-297-4451

Senate Chief Clerk's Office
608-266-2517