

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Page 1

I. Ward Walk Update

II. Transit and RTA

Page 2

I. Stimulus Money

II. Reading/Math Scores

III. Museum Attendance

Page 3

I. Corrections Update

II. Strong Families

III. Back to School!

Page 4

I. Community Events

II. Important Contacts

THROUGH THE LENS



The Senator at her inauguration.



Lena comments at a Judiciary meeting.

4th Senate District LEGISLATIVE UPDATE SENATOR LENA C. TAYLOR

WEEK OF JULY 13 - JULY 17

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.

-Legislative Update In Your Door? Ward Walk Continues!-

During the warm seasons, my staff and I take seriously our commitment to communicating with the community about the work that is happening in Madison and around the state. This week we will be heading to various areas of Wauwatosa and Northwest Milwaukee!

Ward Walks will continue to happen throughout the remainder of the session. When the weather gets a bit colder, they continue by phone. Ward Walks by phone are simple short surveys conducted by my staff and volunteers asking about concerns you may have with the state, any issues you need resolved, and just a general check-in.

Between now and June 1 of next year, the entire 4th Senate District will be walked, called, and contacted to let you know what is happening in our world under the dome. When you see us out walking and knocking on doors, stop and say hi! We appreciate bumping into the people we serve.

-Prize Fight - Governor Jim Doyle v. Milwaukee-

Funding for the transit, parks, and really, all things Milwaukee has been a concern, if not a fight, at the Capitol in Madison over time. There has always been a resistance to keeping the economic engine of the state running, and the Governor's veto in the budget of the transit funding threatens to turn off the key to the engine. By now, the possible reductions in service for the transit system and cuts in the parks system are well known. As the Governor delivers his policy framework or "plan" to the Legislature, we must be mindful of the politics and realities of this fight.

First, the administration is primarily concerned with transit. This means that any likelihood of a sales tax for parks funding or for public safety would not be signed by the Governor. The plan in the budget from the Senate included the transit, parks, and EMS funding as the people requested in the November 2008 referendum. While the conference committee removed the parks funding, primarily due to Assembly KRM forces, the public safety dollars were kept intact. A plan from the Governor that does not recognize the clear reality that without parks or public safety funding, a bill will not pass, is just simply passing the buck.

Second, the administration wants a regional transit system. Regional means regional operation, regional funding, and regional agreement. Another clear reality is there is NO agreement on the enactment of a sales tax among the region, the structure of the authority, or its powers. The Governor is indicating that Racine and Kenosha will have to approve sales tax increase mandates in order for him to approve transit funding. Of course, this ignores the will of Racine and Kenosha and blocks Milwaukee's effort to move forward.

In the coming weeks, this "plan" will be released. If the plan doesn't understand the realities of the politics of transit, parks, and public safety funding, then it is just political cover and not a genuine effort to reach a compromise. If that is the case, then the administration has "stuck it to Milwaukee" twice this year.

MANNERS MOMENT



Dana World-Patterson

Visions Etiquette Training
visionsetiquettetraining.com

A thank you note is imperative after receiving a gift. When hand written, it is more special. Make sure the thank you note gets to the person within two weeks of receiving the gift. An exception might be wedding gifts, since the couple might be busy honeymooning they have 6 to 12 months to reply.

FROM THE BAR

PERJURY

The crime of intentionally lying after being duly sworn (to tell the truth) by a notary public, court clerk, or other official. This false statement may be made in testimony in court, administrative hearings, depositions, as well as signing any legal document known to contain false information. Although it is a crime, prosecutions for perjury are rare, because a defendant will argue he/she merely made a mistake or misunderstood.

-Is There Federal Stimulus Money For You?-

My office has been getting plenty of phone calls recently from folks asking about Federal Stimulus Money. Many people have the impression that they will be receiving a portion of President Obama's Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. To put it plainly, the President's stimulus package does not include money for individuals. The majority of the stimulus is intended for programs and services.

There are two factors that may have led to this confusion. First, many people have been scammed by television, radio, and internet ads that offer means to "obtain your stimulus funds." There have been scams reported where someone will call your house claiming to be from the IRS and offer to directly deposit your stimulus funds into your bank account. It should go without saying that you should *never* give out that information over the phone!

Secondly, some people did not receive their tax refunds from when President Bush was in office. If you recall, in 2008 President Bush and the Congress passed a much smaller stimulus that offered payments to families and individuals, with the average payment being around \$600. For more information, you can contact the IRS at www.irs.gov or 1-800-829-1040.

If you wish to learn more about the President's stimulus plan, you can log on to www.recovery.gov to see where the money is being spent. Additionally, if you have questions about the legislation, you can contact your Federal Government representatives: Senators Herb Kohl and Russ Feingold, and Congresswoman Gwen Moore. You can find their contact information on the final page of this update.

-Reading Gap for Black Students Worst in Nation-

There were test results put out this week by the U.S. Department of Education that I find to be such a tremendous disappointment for our students and families. The average reading ability for fourth and eighth grade black students in Wisconsin is the lowest in the United States. Furthermore, our state is last in the nation when it comes to the reading achievement gap between black and white students.

These results come from a program called the National Assessment of Education Progress. They are similar to the findings they put out in 2003 and 2005, when their last updates were released. Additionally, according to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, the Education Trust has found that Wisconsin school districts with high levels of minority enrollment have \$1,000 less per student than the districts with the highest white student enrollment.

Wisconsin must change direction on this immediately. This is the type of circumstance that can cause problems that span generations, and ends up costing more than it's worth in the end. It is an absolute injustice to the black students of Wisconsin that they must face such an uphill battle. We need to do everything that we can to help them.

-Looking For a Day Vacation? Try a Museum!-

As more people are looking to vacation closer to home, local museums are acting as a place of both entertainment and knowledge. Museum attendance across the Wisconsin Historical Society's 10 historic sites is up 19 percent so far this year. Admission specials, quality daily programming and better weather have been major factors that drew more visitors this year.

The following ones are some of the suggested museums in Milwaukee.

-Milwaukee Public Museum: human and natural history

-Milwaukee Art Museum: paintings, sculptures, photography, etc.

-Discovery World Museum: innovation, science, technology, environment

-Betty Brinn Children's Museum: various exhibits and educational resources for children and their families

INTERN SPOTLIGHT



Becca Ward

Working at Senator Taylor's office as an intern this summer has provided me with an opportunity to experience Wisconsin legislative processes from inside the Capitol. The insights I've gained will make me a more informed and committed citizen and will help me explore related career opportunities. Currently, I'm entering my senior year as a history major at University of Wisconsin-Madison, having just returned from a semester studying Spanish in Sevilla, Spain. I look forward to working in Senator Taylor's office for the remainder of the summer and am grateful for such an incredible opportunity to be part of the team serving the Senator's constituents.

PASTOR'S PULPIT

"Both tears and sweat are salty, but they render a different result. Tears will get you sympathy; sweat will get you change."

Rev. Jesse Jackson

-Making Sense of the Corrections Plan-

Many of you know that I am active in the policymaking for the Wisconsin Corrections System. As chair of the Senate Committee overseeing the Corrections System and the Special Committee on Justice Reinvestment Oversight, I had the opportunity to include in the budget, data driven, evidence based sentencing reforms from the Justice Center that would have saved the state over 2.5 billion dollars in the next ten years and prevented massive prison building. The plans would have added accountability and stability into our sentencing structure in Wisconsin.

Unfortunately, the plan fell victim to the Governor's veto. The Governor eliminated the cap on revocations which drive our booming population, the extended supervision limits were deleted, and the goal of 25% reduction in recidivism was deleted. While the Governor offered some lip service to the reasons for the veto, it is puzzling why removing the accountability from the department and involvement of the judiciary was necessary.

Moving forward, it is my intention to carefully watch and provide diligent oversight over the new release plans the Governor enacted. While I am hopeful that these plans succeed in some way, I and experts familiar with the system doubt the plan's ability to reach the goals it has and be successful. Careful management will be required.

-Strengthening Wisconsin Families-

On Wednesday July 15th, the Strengthening Wisconsin Families Committee met to start on the road towards wrap-up. The committee began to discuss the remaining five bills that have yet to be voted on by the committee. Co-Chair Representative Kestell and I invited the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to speak on their positions on the bills that were discussed.

It was a very disappointing day in committee for myself and the other members. Let's just say, we weren't quiet about it. Each member expressed their displeasure with the participation and response from DCF. The intent of the committee was to fine-tune the bills prior to voting on them and DCF was invited to help in that process. Unfortunately, the participation we received on Wednesday was the same we received in the past. The department would not speak specifically to issues or concerns they had with the legislation. The committee charged DCF with the task of reporting back to the next committee meeting with specific details. This meeting, likely to be held in mid-August, could be the last one this term.

This committee is a passion of mine and I would be extremely saddened to see all our hard work be wasted. We will do all we can to make sure our work to strengthen Wisconsin families is not wasted.

-Back to School!-

It is always the right time to get back to school and hit the books! A good education is crucial and when opportunities like this arise I make it a point to inform my constituents. It doesn't matter if you are returning to college or transferring from another institution, there will be information on ways to continue or finish your degree at Mount Mary College.

Appointments are available from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday. To schedule a visit, please contact the Admission Office at 1-800-321-6265 or e-mail admiss@mtmary.edu. The event runs from July 20-24. If you are looking for new or different opportunities, this is a great chance to take a step towards a brighter future.



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Community Events

What: Milwaukee School of Engineering Open House

When: Saturday, July 18th

Where: 1025 N. Broadway, Milwaukee, 53202

Info: Come see the labs, talk to a counselor, speak with the faculty, and see the university! (800) 332-6763

What: Liver Life Walk

When: Saturday, August 8th

Where: Veterans Park

Info: A fundraiser to raise funds for the American Liver Foundation to help fight and promote education about liver disease.

www.liverfoundation.org/walk

If an organization you belong to has an event you feel should be included in the Community Events section please [e-mail](mailto:) 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

Badger Care Insurance
1-800-362-3002

Milwaukee Common Council
414-286-2221

City of Glendale
414-228-1700

Milwaukee County Economic Support
414-289-6000

US Congresswoman Gwen Moore
414-297-1140

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

Wisconsin Foreclosure Hotline
414-278-1240

US Senator Russ Feingold
414-276-7282

Human Resources
608-264-8471

Medicaid
1-800-291-2002

US Senator Herb Kohl
414-297-4451

Senate Chief Clerk's Office
608-266-2517