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Governor Doyle Urges Legislature to Act on Priorities

Governor Doyle today urged the State Legislature to act on six bills that include making price gouging illegal in Wisconsin, expanding Family Care statewide, approving his *Healthy Wisconsin* catastrophic health care proposal, and passing important ethics and elections reforms.

"We have accomplished some important business over the last few months – signing more than 300 bills into law, from emergency heating assistance to strengthening sex offender enforcement," Governor Doyle said. "But the Legislature still has not dealt with some of the most important priorities, and from what they have said about their agenda for next week, I'm concerned about what might get left on the back burner. That's why I'm calling on the Legislature to act. These priorities are important not only to me, but to the people of Wisconsin."

Governor Doyle urged the Legislature to pass the following six pieces of legislation:

- Senate Bill 373, sponsored by Senator Dave Hansen and Representative Josh Zepnick, and Senate Bill 358, sponsored by Senators Neal Kedzie and Dale Schultz, which would make price gouging illegal in Wisconsin. Last year Governor Doyle signed legislation that ended automatic tax increases in gasoline, and these two bills would help to protect Wisconsin consumers from overnight price hikes at the pump.
- Senate Bill 653, which would expand Family Care statewide. The Governor proposed statewide expansion of the program in his State of the State address in January 2006. The Legislature has already adopted legislation that will include more areas of the state in the program, started by Republican Governor Tommy Thompson, which will help more people move out of nursing homes and into community-based care.
- Assembly Bill 1171, the Governor's *Healthy Wisconsin* proposal, which would address the costs of catastrophic insurance. Under the plan, the state will set up a large, catastrophic insurance pool with lower rates that employers can join. By working together to lower the price of insuring the sickest among the population, the state can reduce health care costs for everyone.
- Senate Bill 612, which would require more and better trained poll workers, election day plans to reduce waiting times, and stronger protections against voting by felons. After proposing a comprehensive, bipartisan election reform package, Governor Doyle worked closely with Senator Joe Liebham, Representative Steve Freese, and others on this legislation.

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- The Governor's ethics reform package, which calls for a ban on all fundraising during the budget process and prohibits former officials from lobbying the government they helped run.
- Senate Bill 1, which would merge the Elections and Ethics Board and would give the new board increased investigatory and enforcement authority.

"These are major changes, and I know there's always a resistance to change," Governor Doyle said. "But the Legislature has had plenty of time to study these reforms and now it's time for them to do what is in the best interests of the people of Wisconsin and take action."