

December 1, 2006

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Delegation

Dear Farm Bureau Member:

It's come to my attention that you will be hearing a presentation on the "Wisconsin Health Plan" at the Farm Bureau annual meeting next week. I also understand that your members may be asked to take a position in support of the plan. I urge you to not to support the "Wisconsin Health Plan" (WHP) until several serious questions about the plan can be answered.

The WHP will result in the largest tax increase on small business in state history. Wisconsin's economy is driven by small businesses and our farms are the original small business in the state. Small businesses are the largest job creators in the state. To impose an enormous tax increase on our largest job creation would make our state less competitive at a time when we need every advantage we can get.

According to the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau, the WHP can't pay for itself. According to the Fiscal Bureau, the plan would be short \$8.7 billion in the first year alone. The lack of funding can only be addressed in two ways: increasing this new and unprecedented tax on small businesses even higher or dramatically reducing payments to health care providers. Reducing payments would likely lead to physician flight and facility closings, especially from rural areas. The last thing we need as a state is for people in rural areas to have a harder time finding quality care.

The Fiscal Bureau memo, which I have included with this letter, also outlines a serious concern about the plan. The WHP will likely lead to thousands of employers paying more than they currently are for lesser coverage.

It is my understanding that an actuarial study is being conducted on the WHP at this time. I urge your members to hold off support of this plan until the results of that study are made public. It is my hope that a full review of this plan will address the many, many questions the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau raises – as well as unforeseen problems that may arise.

I assure you that the Legislature will make health care reform a top priority this session. We are already beginning to work on real, cost-effective solutions to drive down the cost of health care and maintain the high quality of physicians and facilities we already enjoy. I

look forward to working with you in finding those solutions and I urge the Farm Bureau to hold off endorsing any plan until other solutions are brought forth.

Thank you for taking time to read my concerns. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or if you have any further ideas on how best to provide quality, affordable health care that benefits everyone in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mike Huebsch".

Mike Huebsch
Assembly Speaker-Elect