

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for all of your hard work to help us regain the majority in the State Assembly for the first time in 14 years. You and I both wanted to serve in the State Legislature to get something done. Now Assembly Democrats have a tremendous opportunity to set a course for change in Wisconsin that tackles the most pressing issues for our constituents. We are in this position to lead through the tireless work of so many in our caucus and of our superb campaign staff in all corners of the state.

While we celebrate our historic victory, we face a monumental task. These are difficult economic times and Wisconsin faces a record budget deficit. It's a time for strong leadership and tough choices. In two years, the voters will judge us on how we met these challenges. Starting today we all must build the case for a second term in the majority. I look forward to discussing with you my ideas for structuring our caucus, our agenda, our campaign effort and your priorities for the upcoming session.

Most of us have never been in the majority. Those who have encouraged me to run for Speaker believe I am the candidate with the experience, temperament and strength to lead our caucus in this new challenge. I am writing to ask for your vote for Speaker.

I have been honored to serve as assistant leader of our caucus since 2002. As Speaker, I will continue working with members on all points of the ideological spectrum. And I will continue traveling to all corners of the state to help our members, not just during the final days of the campaigns, but throughout the legislative session. My staff and I have the proven experience to work with you to establish a shared agenda and effectively lead on the Assembly floor, in the Governor's conference room, in the press and in our communities.

As Speaker I will continue to work hard to ensure that our candidates and incumbents have the resources to run strong campaigns. Since being named co-chair of our campaign committee in 2000, and subsequently in my leadership role, I have worked with our candidates in over 35 Assembly districts across the state. During this campaign cycle, I helped recruit, advise, raise money, and knock on doors for our candidates and incumbents with tough races.

You exemplify the extraordinary skill and diverse life experience that makes our caucus so strong. I am committed to actively engaging you and our other members to build our unified and winning team. We must involve our incredibly talented new members as early and as deeply as possible.

I will try to reach you over the next couple of days to discuss this critical choice in leadership. If we miss each other, please feel free to contact me in my Madison office at (608) 266-0650 or on my cell phone at (414) 416-1695. Thank you for your consideration. I would be honored to have your support.

Sincerely,

Jon Richards