

To: Assembly Democratic Caucus
From: Speaker Mike Sheridan, Majority Leader Thomas Nelson
Date: Tuesday, September 15, 2009
Re: Standing Up For Wisconsin Families

Nine months ago, Assembly Democrats took the majority under the worst economic conditions in generations.

Faced with these challenges, we didn't decide to sit on the sidelines. We got to work, getting Wisconsin back on track.

Despite early obstacles, including a record \$6.6 billion dollar deficit, we were able to pass a budget that contained some of the deepest spending cuts in the state's history while protecting 99% of Wisconsin residents from an income tax increase, protecting every resident from a general sales tax increase, and protecting important priorities like education, public services, and public safety.

The budget also contained additional worker training dollars and more than \$200 million in business boosting tax credits and incentives that are already paying off. In the past few months, two biotech firms have chosen to relocate here because of our business climate, and major manufacturers have chosen to continue their operations here.

We have also worked closely with officials on every level of government to ensure that federal stimulus funds are being distributed quickly and used wisely to make the greatest impact on our economy. Wisconsin has been a national leader in making use of federal stimulus funds.

Our job is far from over. In the months ahead, we will continue to stand up for families across Wisconsin. We hope to do this with the help of Assembly Republicans, the State Senate, and the Governor.

Attached to this memo is a brief description of our agenda as we move into the fall session. With our legislative session days to come, we hope to build on our successes in boosting Wisconsin's economy by passing bills to support growth in the green jobs sector. We will work to protect the dream of homeownership and address the issue of drunk driving. We will work to clean up campaigns. We will continue to protect Wisconsin's outdoor places. *In all these efforts, we will be standing up for Wisconsin families.*

I welcome your ideas and thank you for the input you've given over the summer months in preparation for the fall session fast approaching.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL J. SHERIDAN
Speaker
Wisconsin State Assembly



THOMAS M. NELSON
Majority Leader
Wisconsin State Assembly



GROWING THE GREEN JOBS ECONOMY

Assembly Democrats passed a number of business boosting tax credits in the state budget and a number of initiatives to strengthen our workforce for the long term. To continue to get our economy back on track and to keep it strong in the future we need to focus on developing the green jobs economy of today.

- **Streamlining wind energy policy to unleash its true potential** – AB 256 is a vital step in breaking stalemates on wind projects across the state so we can unleash this green industry’s potential to:
 - Grow the state’s green industry sector, creating family-supporting jobs.
 - Attract new companies to Wisconsin.
 - Protect our environment.

PROTECTING THE PUBLIC FROM DRUNK DRIVERS

Assembly Democrats are committed to working on drunken driving reforms that will help keep people safe in their communities and on the road.

- AB 283 is an omnibus package that will address this serious problem by:
 - **Toughening penalties** – Including making a 4th DWI offense a felony, extending license revocation, and increasing penalties for injuries.
 - **Taking on the root of the problem** by providing prevention measures like mandatory ignition interlock for first time .15 offenders and individualized probation and treatment options for offenders.

S.T.O.P. HOME FORECLOSURES

Earlier this year, a bipartisan taskforce of legislators, lending experts and consumer advocates was formed to develop ideas that will help Wisconsin families who have been caught in the current foreclosure crisis. We must act quickly to protect the dream of homeownership and to prevent the nightmare of foreclosure.

- **Protecting families from poor lending practices** – To strengthen our economy we must arm people with the information they need to make smart financial decisions when buying a home, and protect them during a foreclosure. Our initiatives to address this critical issue include:
 - **Ensuring that homeowners who face foreclosure will receive the information they need to help them keep their homes.** Prevention can save many families from the final reality of a foreclosure.
 - **Strengthening financial literacy education so that future homebuyers are prepared to buy their first home.** Much of the housing crisis was caused by consumers misunderstanding their agreements, and in some cases, bad acting lenders preying on this lack of knowledge.
 - **Give individuals facing foreclosure the opportunity to make modifications to their loan and stay in their home.** Helping families keep their homes while honoring their loans will help them get back on the feet sooner and help the economy in the long run.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Assembly Democrats will build on the steps they took earlier this session, like enacting a historic policy-change that prohibited legislator fundraising during the budget, to reform our government and our elections.

- **Cleaning up Supreme Court Elections** – We will fight for AB 65, the Impartial Justice Bill, which provides public financing for State Supreme Court campaigns.

PROTECTING WISCONSIN'S OUTDOOR HERITAGE

Assembly Democrats know that Wisconsin's outdoor heritage must be preserved for the good of the people who enjoy our pristine places and for our tourism economy.

- **Returning to an Independent DNR** – Assembly Democrats have always believed in the importance of an independent Department of Natural Resources and will work to pass AB 138.