

Rep. Hebl: Rep. Gary Hebl's 2018 New Year's Resolutions

Posted on Friday, Dec 29, 2017

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December 28, 2017
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Rep. Gary

Rep. Gary Hebl's 2018 New Year's Resolutions

Christmas and Hanukkah have come and gone, and a new year looms on the horizon. As we prepare to enter 2018, many people are preparing new goals to meet and new priorities to focus on. We, as state legislators, would be well served to follow suit. For too long, those in power in our state have focused not on the interest of Wisconsin citizens but rather the interests of corporations and deep pocketed political donors. It seems legislators have become servants of political organizations instead of the citizens they represent. It is time to re-think our states priorities. Here are my 2018 New Year's Resolutions.

1. Education

- K-12 and higher education have been severely underfunded over the last six years. While the most recent budget did get some of that money back, we have still not returned to the funding levels we had before 2011. We need a shift in how we think about education and to stop vilifying teachers (as well as other state workers) and properly appreciate the work they do

for our school children. Education is the key to Wisconsin's future- it is and will remain my #1 issue moving forward.

1. Environment

- Environmental protection has been put on the back burner since the Walker administration has been in control. The Department of Natural Resources has been almost neutralized, acting essentially as an arm of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (the semi-private agency created after Governor Walker shut down the Department of Commerce). Wisconsin was once at the forefront of effective environmental protection. I will work to strengthen environmental protections once again so that we can fight back against pollution and climate change and ensure that our children and grandchildren have healthy and safe water and air.

1. Health Care

- We must ensure that Wisconsin citizens have access to affordable health care. That means that we must accept the Medicaid expansion, which could cover 274,000 Wisconsin residents. It is more important than ever to make sure that the people of Wisconsin have some measure of confidence that they will be able to receive the care they need. I will fight for expanding Medicare and to continually improve access to affordable healthcare for all Wisconsin residents.

1. Jobs and the Economy

- Wisconsin's economy has been lagging the much of the Midwest and the most of the country. Much of the economic woes that our state has faced can be traced back to education. People can see when we don't value our schools and teachers. People want to live and work where their children can get a quality education, and they don't see that in Wisconsin right now. We need to invest in education so that we have an enticing environment for people to live and go to school. With that we will be training more highly skilled workers that will want to stay and work in Wisconsin and that will attract more employers. I will work to improve education and career training to ensure Wisconsin has a workforce employers seek.

1. Roads/Bridges

- The roads and bridges in our state are in dire need of repair. This is an issue that we have tried to hammer home again and again and yet it continually falls on deaf ears. We need to work together to come up with a viable solution so that the people of this state don't have to drive on unsafe, cracked roads filled with potholes. I will work with my colleagues in the legislature to repair and improve our state's roads and bridges.

1. Voting Rights

- Voting is an American's most fundamental right, and it has been under attack over the last 7 years in Wisconsin. From hyper-partisan gerrymandering to restrictive voter ID laws, we have seen some of the most underhanded techniques employed recently in order to help one political party maintain power. We should want more people voting, not fewer. In the coming years we need to have non-partisan redistricting put in place, and we must repeal suppressive Voter ID laws. Other positive steps for voting rights also include automatic voter registration and expanding early voting hours. I will strive to make it easier for Wisconsin residents to vote to ensure that elections truly represent the will of the majority.

I am under no illusion that any of these problems will be fixed or even addressed in 2018. For that, we are going to need a sea change in the Wisconsin Legislature. My hopes for that have been buoyed by recent election results around the country, and I am as optimistic as ever that after next November, we will be able to begin to make things right for residents of Wisconsin.

Regardless of what future elections may bring, I am eager to put partisanship aside and to work with my colleagues across the aisle to try to find genuine solutions to the problems we face. Negotiation and compromise have become vilified by those who seek out ideological purity. I disagree wholeheartedly. Compromise and negotiation are what adults do to solve problems. I have lived and worked in Wisconsin my whole life. Every day I meet people with different political viewpoints and I find there is much more that we hold in common than what the current political atmosphere would lead us to believe. When we remove ourselves from political grandstanding we find that we are neighbors. Neighbors band together and find solutions to problems they face. They don't ignore their neighbors in need to score cheap political points. For the greater good of all Wisconsin residents, this

burgeoning hyper-partisanship must stop. I resolve in the New Year to work for the people of the 46th Assembly District and the people of Wisconsin.

Rep. Gary Hebl represents the 46th Assembly District, which includes the Cities of Sun Prairie and Stoughton, the Village of Cottage Grove, and the Townships of Cottage Grove, Dunkirk, Pleasant Springs, and Sun Prairie.

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