

Rep. Schraa: Votes in favor of budget

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(Madison, WI) Representative Michael Schraa (R-Oshkosh) voted in favor of the 2017-19 state budget tonight. Schraa, who formerly served on the Joint Finance Committee, is pleased with the overall budget package.

“I appreciate every constituent who took time to express an opinion on the various budget provisions. Unfortunately, it took much longer than anticipated to come to an agreement, but it is well-considered, well-balanced plan.”

“This is a good compromise budget, and I am pleased that several of my proposals were included.

“As Chair of the Assembly Corrections Committee, the Department of Corrections (DOC) provisions were a top priority, especially my own budget motion requests.

- DOC will develop a new intensive alcohol treatment program that includes work release.

- DOC will recognize and reward long-term employees with lump sum payments on five-year employment anniversaries.

- An assisted living facility for older and unhealthy inmates will save money and fulfill the state’s responsibility to provide appropriate treatment.

“This budget is especially good for educating all the children of Wisconsin. Some highlights are increasing funding by \$639 million, giving more parents choices for their children, and providing matching funds for laptops for all high school freshmen. It also includes the provisions of Assembly Bill 269 which I authored; most referenda will be scheduled with the spring and fall elections to reduce the cost and assure greater participation.

“The agreement for transportation funding is reasonable, given the unfortunate history of Democratic raids on the Transportation Fund. The fund has been repaid by Republicans, and we championed a Constitutional Amendment to protect the designated funds. Because of the irresponsible delay, infrastructure deteriorated and cost of repairs increased. We have struck a difficult balance between necessary investment and responsible bonding.

“On the other hand, we still have a long way to go on tax reform and transportation. This budget process has taken longer than necessary; I hope the Senate takes it up in the very near future.