

# Sen. Marklein: Statement on and summary of the Legislature's extraordinary session

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**CONTACT: Senator Howard Marklein, 608-266-0703**

Madison, WI – Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) released the following statement on the Legislature's Extraordinary Session:

“The content of the legislature's extraordinary session primarily consisted of legislative efforts to protect citizens from their government. The changes we made restore authority to the legislature rather than relinquishing it to unaccountable, unelected state agency bureaucrats. Throughout my service and the most recent campaign, my constituents told me to stand tall and stand-up for the reforms we have made.”

“Despite the misleading criticism of those who opposed our work, the legislature simply asserted legislative authority as part of a balanced, three-branch government, built to check and balance among the branches. We reigned-in government – not Governor-Elect Tony Evers and Attorney General-Elect Josh Kaul. I strongly believe in co-equal branches of government and these changes enable the legislature to perform our duties as a part of this system despite the partisan rhetoric that misled citizens and continues to divide us. So much for civility and cooperation.”

“A ‘lame-duck’ session is the only realistic time a legislature has the ability to restore legislative authority that has been changed over time because a Governor is not going to restrict his own power. In our case, more than a dozen of the items we

passed were attempted in legislation that was vetoed by the Governor at some point over the last eight years.”

“I believe that the changes we made will ultimately benefit the people we serve because the legislature will be able to do our work and perform our duties on even-footing with the executive and judicial branch.”

“The changes we made do not strip Governor-Elect Evers and Attorney General-Elect Kaul of their powers. The changes we made assert the role of the legislature and ensure that we have a role and seat at the table in order to represent our constituents.”

“For example, several of the key changes codified Administrative Rules into state statute so that the positive reforms we have made throughout the last several years cannot be reversed by unaccountable agency bureaucrats or a wide-sweeping Executive Order. These are things that voters have asked us to preserve, such as the free identification card process for Voter ID.”

“We also pulled back a government agency’s ability to make-up ‘Guidance Documents’ for decisions that are currently used to punish citizens and are held up as ‘fact’ and ‘law’ in court when they have never gone through the public legislative process.”

“Many citizens have been cited and fined for things based on ‘Guidance Documents’ that are written by an individual bureaucrat without any sort of oversight. This is wrong! Then, a citizen has little to no recourse because the rules are internal and made by an unaccountable agency employees.”

“Citizens elect legislators to make laws, not agency bureaucrats. While some may cite this example as ‘stripping the Governor’s power,’ I see it as making sure that laws are made through the legislative process, not within the bowels of a government agency.”

“The Attorney General-Elect has told us that he is not going to represent the legislature in several cases that are currently in the court system. As a legislature, it is our responsibility to take steps to continue to represent our constituents. If the Attorney General-Elect will not represent us, we must be able to represent ourselves.”

“In addition, Governor-Elect Evers has told us that he plans to dismantle the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). The changes we made build a transition for this agency in order to protect substantial economic development projects that are currently in progress throughout the state. We have businesses making significant investments all over Wisconsin and scrapping the agency that provides support and resources for them in one swipe of a pen would be disastrous for our local economies.”

“The WEDC transitional plan that we passed will enable the legislature to work with the Governor-Elect throughout the first eight months of his administration to smoothly transition this important agency. We see this as a good first step in collaboratively seeking the best path forward for our economy. It is in direct response to his bold statements. The legislature must represent the interests of those we serve.”

“From the beginning of this process, I opposed making changes to the Presidential Primary date. I encouraged my colleagues to abandon this change and I am pleased that we did not add another election day to our calendar. Municipal and County Clerks throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> Senate District reached out to me to share their concerns and I agreed with their thoughts on this matter.”

“However, I supported changes to In-Person Absentee Voting, also known as Early Voting, because a person’s ability and opportunity to vote should not depend on their zip code. In rural Wisconsin, many (if not most) of our clerks and municipal offices are part-time offices. They cannot be open for the same hours and accessibility as larger municipalities like Milwaukee and Madison. Why should an urban voter have more time to vote than a rural voter?”

“The change we made allows for two weeks of early, in-person absentee voting. It is a fair, standardization of dates across the state that make it equal for everyone.”

“The first bill we passed will bring more Federal funding to highway rehabilitation projects in rural Wisconsin and provides tax relief for small, main street businesses. These were positive, important changes that are receiving little attention. I look forward to the outcomes of this bill.”

“However, I am disappointed that we were not able to pass legislation that would protect people with pre-existing conditions. I am seriously disappointed that Democrats who criticized Republicans about this issue throughout the midterm

elections would not put politics aside to protect our people. Not a single Democrat voted for this bill, which ultimately killed it. I hope that we will be able to revisit this issue again in the future. I will continue to support this protection on behalf of my family, friends and everyone I serve.”

“I recognize that the Extraordinary Session was difficult for the people of Wisconsin. I am sorry that so many intelligent people were intentionally misled to believe that the legislature was somehow destroying the Executive and Judicial branches of Wisconsin. This was simply not the case. The bottom-line is that the legislature took steps to assert legislative authority so that we can operate as a co-equal branch of government and continue to represent the citizens of our districts.”