

# Gary Hebl: New governor brings hope of progress

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On Monday, January 7th, Tony Evers was sworn in as the 46th Governor of Wisconsin. Already we are seeing signs that our new Governor will seek input from those around him as well as stakeholders in moving Wisconsin forward.

Before being sworn in, Governor Evers and Lieutenant Governor Barnes spent much of the transition period traveling around Wisconsin to get citizens' input on what ought to be included in the state budget. It is a welcome change of pace to see Wisconsin's governor talking directly to the people he represents to ensure that their voices are heard. In contrast, the previous administration took a "my way or the highway" approach to governing, which generally meant that they would appease wealthy people funding their next campaign instead of listening to residents of Wisconsin.

What I am especially excited about is the new administration's approach to education. For too long, our public schools have been underfunded and unfairly neglected. Governor Evers has pledged to once again sufficiently fund schools. A Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding, co-chaired by Republicans State Senator Luther Olsen and Representative Joel Kitchens, has come to the same conclusions as Governor Evers: our schools desperately need a funding increase. With the backing of the governor as well as a Commission chaired by Republicans, I am confident that we will reach a bipartisan agreement that ensures Wisconsin schools get what they need to properly educate schoolchildren.

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On January 9, Governor Evers signed executive orders regarding expanding health coverage for Wisconsin residents and providing protections for Wisconsinites who live with pre-existing conditions. Despite a legislature that is run by an opposing party, it is clear that Governor Evers is staying true to his promises to the Wisconsinites who elected him, and making every effort he can to improve lives for people across the state.

We have just finished eight years of an administration whose only thoughts were to maintain its grip on power. To do that, they saw it necessary to kowtow to wealthy donors and special interest groups. Now we are seeing what it is like to have a governor take action based on what he is hearing from everyday people of Wisconsin. As Governor Evers said in his inaugural address, we must be ready “to do what’s best for the next generation rather than the next election.” It appears that Governor Evers is returning power in Wisconsin to the people, and that’s something that has me excited for the next four years.

— Hebl, D-Sun Prairie, represents the 46th Assembly District.