

Rep. Sargent: A down payment on progress - Governor Evers signs 2019-2021 budget

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MADISON – Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison) released the following statement in response to Governor Tony Evers’ signing of the 2019-21 budget:

“Today, Governor Tony Evers signed the 2019-21 state budget, using his partial veto powers to make the best of a tough situation. For the past few months Republican leadership and lawmakers have been obstructionists, putting partisan antics above doing what is best for the people of our state. They stripped Governor Evers’ budget proposal of key provisions such as cannabis reform and accepting Medicaid expansion, while proposing a watered down budget plan that did not listen to the will of Wisconsinites. Republicans put Governor Evers in an impossible situation, stuck between accepting their anemic budget proposal or reverting back to Walker era funding levels.

Fortunately, Governor Evers is resourceful and puts the people first— he rolled up his sleeves and sharpened his pencil in order to do everything in his power to improve the GOP approved budget through using 78 partial vetoes and innovatively increasing education funding by nearly \$100 million. I applaud Governor Evers’ creativity in taking important steps to bring equity back to Wisconsin. Although the

budget signed today falls short in many areas, the Governor's use of his constitutional veto power to reshape this budget shows that he is truly prioritizing the needs of our friends and neighbors, and further epitomizing the will of the people.

While the budget that was signed into law today is not the Governor's comprehensive People's Budget, it is, as Governor Evers said, a down payment on progress. This budget moves the ball down the field, and is crafted to create opportunity for further headway and progress to be made in our state.

That being said, Wisconsin still has a long way to go to achieve true equality and economic development. Today, thousands of Wisconsinites will go to work to make a wage that cannot support their growing families—others will continue to sit in Wisconsin prisons from out-of-date penalties for low level drug offenses. We cannot become complacent when we see our community members struggle to achieve individual advancement, while a select few profit off of the working class. There is work to be done, and I vow to continue fighting to move the needle forward in our state.

I am proud to stand with the Governor today as we open a new chapter in our states economic and social history. Governor Evers' signing of the budget today has taken steps to put the last 8-years of partisan conflict behind us, and has opened new doors to collaboration. I look forward to my Republican colleagues seizing this opportunity for across the aisle partnerships, and following in the Governor's footsteps as he reaffirms his commitment to leading with kindness, compassion, civility, and respect while working to better our state."

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Melissa Sargent is a State Representative in the Wisconsin Assembly, representing the 48th Assembly District, which covers the east and north sides of the city of Madison and the village of Maple Bluff