

# Rep. OhnstadL Session closes with some successes and more missed opportunities

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MADISON – Republican leaders in the State Assembly have announced today will be the final day the body will be on the floor to vote on legislation, despite a formal calendar which allows for further floor periods through March on all bills, and limited matters until May. Rep. Tod Ohnstad (D-Kenosha) issued the following statement recounting some of the positive proposals that have passed this week and significant legislation which was not scheduled for votes by the GOP majority:

“The session comes to a close this week after achieving some successes, but unfortunately leaving many more missed opportunities on proposals important to the people of Wisconsin.

Earlier this week our house passed a series of bipartisan water quality bills. These will help families fix contaminated wells and failing septic systems, expand conservation efforts, boost research, and better protect drinking water. One of these unanimous bills included provisions I have worked on for several years to require child care centers and schools to test for lead in drinking water. Children are particularly susceptible to lead poisoning, which can slow growth and brain development; this causes learning or behavior problems, internal organ damage, hearing loss, and even death.

Throughout this session progress was made on other key issues. From efforts to combat opioid addiction to suicide prevention, we have taken action that will improve the lives of Wisconsinites. Several common sense bills I have authored have made their way to Governor Evers’ desk.

Unfortunately, too many critical priorities were left on the table. The people of our state have called on us to fully fund the needs of our schools, contain the costs of medication and accept federal healthcare funds, require background checks for gun purchases, provide a fair redistricting process, establish reasonable marijuana policies, reform our criminal justice system, and protect homeowners from the dark store property tax loophole. The solutions are there, but they were not scheduled for a vote.

A proposal I authored would have provided fairer taxation of the pensions of federal employees to alleviate a disparity where some are taxed and others are not. The legislation had broad bipartisan support and was passed out of committee unanimously. However, despite strong backing from both parties and the resources available to accomplish this goal, passing this bill was not made a priority by GOP leaders.

We missed these opportunities and I hope the Republican majority will reconsider their decisions to block action on important and widely supported proposals before session ends.”