

# Sen. Bernier: A voice from west-central Wisconsin

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Earlier today, State Senator Kathy Bernier (R-Lake Hallie) was appointed to serve on the Wisconsin Legislatures' Joint Finance Committee for the 2021-22 legislative biennium. She will be the first person to represent this part of the state on the committee in more than a decade.

"I am honored to work with my colleagues in setting fiscal priorities for the next two years," said Sen. Bernier. "Citizens and small businesses have had a very rough time during this COVID-19 crisis. Unemployment issues, business failure, mental health and substance abuse are just a few of the challenges we've faced over the past ten months and will need to be addressed in the upcoming budget."

The Joint Committee on Finance is a statutory, 16-member standing committee of the Wisconsin Legislature. The Committee's primary responsibility is to serve as the principal legislative committee charged with the review of all state appropriations and revenues as well as facilitating the biennial state budget.

"It is always difficult to set financial priorities, however I am eager to focus on how we can effectively address our most pressing challenges," Sen. Bernier continued. "One of my top priorities will be addressing mental health needs. Twenty-two proposed mental health beds were vetoed in the previous budget by the governor. I am still focused and hopeful that those in-patient beds located in our area and serving all of northern, western and central Wisconsin will become a reality in this biennium. Mental health care for any area of the state is a win for the entire state."

Sen. Kathy Bernier represents Wisconsin's 23rd State Senate Seat including all of Chippewa, Clark and portions of Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, Marathon, Trempealeau and Wood counties. She was elected to the Senate in 2018 for a four year term.