

Rep. Spreitzer: Applauds 2021-2023 budget address from Gov. Tony Evers

Posted on Wednesday, Feb 17, 2021

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MADISON – Following the Governor’s 2021-2023 Budget Address this evening, State Representative Mark Spreitzer (D-Beloit) released the following statement:

“Tonight, Governor Evers proposed the Badger Bounceback agenda, a vision for our state’s future that charts a course forward to a stronger Wisconsin following the COVID-19 pandemic. With historic funding for rural broadband, small business development, and agriculture, the Badger Bounceback agenda makes critical investments in the urgent issues that Wisconsin must address, while also implementing fair maps and improving absentee ballot processing.

“I am very pleased that the Governor’s budget proposal invests nearly \$200 million in the expansion of rural broadband over the biennium. The current COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the importance of broadband access in our district and our state — throughout the pandemic, I have heard directly from constituents who are unable to telecommute or teleschool easily due to challenges with connectivity. I shared my thoughts with Governor Evers on this issue, and I am extremely grateful that he has taken decisive action to address this clear need.

“This budget also makes a crucial investment of over \$43 million in our state’s family farms and agricultural producers. The Governor included funding for farmers’ mental health and well-being, promoting agricultural innovation and farmer-led conservation, and expanding market opportunities locally and internationally. This is a crucial, much-needed investment in our rural communities and farmers.

“The Governor’s proposal prioritizes economic development and will help Wisconsin

small businesses bounce back from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. I shared with Governor Evers that COVID-19 recovery for small businesses is one of my strong priorities this year, and I was very pleased to see that his proposal will create a \$200 million fund to assist small businesses and provide a new \$100 million venture capital program in our state.

“I applaud Governor Evers for making fair maps and improvements to our electoral systems a priority. As conspiracy theories and falsehoods about the 2020 election continue to circulate, Democrats are leading with a vision for fair and open elections. I firmly support the Governor’s commitment to ensuring that our legislative and congressional district maps in Wisconsin are fair and impartial, and encourage my Republican colleagues to come to the table instead of again drawing maps behind closed doors. And by giving local clerks more time to process absentee ballots ahead of Election Day, Governor Evers is not only making sure our maps are fair, but helping our clerks deliver final results more quickly.

“Finally, I am pleased that additional asks that I made of Governor Evers were included in his state budget. The state budget provides grants for crisis intervention training for police officers so they are better equipped to respond without lethal force to situations involving mental health crises. It increases General Transportation Aids (GTA) program funding to ensure municipalities receive the construction and maintenance funding necessary to improve county and municipal roads. And it supports LGBTQ families by restoring domestic partnership benefits and recognizing marriage equality by making statutory references to marriage and parental rights gender-neutral.

“I am hopeful that as we debate this budget, we will work towards these common goals that reflect our shared Wisconsin values.”