

Sen. Marklein: Capitol update: 2022 preview

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Welcome to 2022! I am starting this year with optimism and excitement for the potential a new year brings.

While a new year can be a clean slate for many different parts of life, in the case of the state legislature, the transition from an odd to an even year continues the ongoing legislative session. The current legislative session began in January 2021 and continues through March 2022.

As you may remember, last January I was appointed co-chair of the legislature's budget-writing Joint Finance Committee (JFC). Most of spring and summer 2021 was consumed by the state budget. I am so proud of our work. We were able to fund all of our priorities while returning \$3.2 billion in tax relief to you.

I also worked on stand-alone bills and was able to move seven laws all of the way through the legislative process for the Governor's signature. All of these bills started with a constituent recommendation and ended with bi-partisan support.

As we begin 2022, I am continuing to work on several bills that are at various stages of the legislative process, including:

- a Broadband Grant Program modernization bill,
- a constitutional amendment to use generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) accounting for the state budget,
- Tobacco 21 legislation to align state law with federal law,
- Truth in Food Labeling legislation for our farmers,
- Rural EMS legislation to make the NREMT exam optional,
- a bill to modernize the Next Gen 911 system,

- a bill to give Correctional Officers and security staff additional compensation to address the staffing crisis at our prisons.

I expect the State Senate to meet throughout January, February and into March. Our last possible session day is March 10, 2022.

I am planning to hold listening sessions throughout the 17th Senate District to hear about your ideas, as well as to provide assistance with state-related matters. A schedule of these sessions is in progress and will be announced soon.

The JFC may meet throughout 2022 to consider agency proposals for spending supplemental funds and other issues as well. There are always study committees that meet in the summer months of even years too.

No matter what is happening on the official legislative calendar, I am always available to provide assistance with state-related issues. If you have a question or issue that involves a state agency or state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. Our team in the Capitol is very skilled at navigating state government and they are there to help.

For example, our team will continue to monitor natural disaster assistance funds for our communities and make sure they get paid. We will keep track of road construction projects and planning to make sure they stay on time. We will clear obstacles and answer questions for individuals who need help with state-government programs. If you need help, please call or email me.

Overall, I am looking forward to being out-and-about in our communities talking with you and providing assistance where I can be helpful. It is great to connect with you locally.

As always, please do not hesitate to connect with me to provide input, ideas or to seek assistance. Send an email to sen.marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov or call 608-266-0703.