



**BOB KULP**

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 69TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

For Immediate Release

June 27th, 2019

## **Rep. Kulp: Letter to the Editor on Passage of the State Budget**

Dear Editor:

On June 25, 2019, the Wisconsin State Assembly passed Assembly Bill 56/Senate Bill 59 that addresses the next two year State Budget. I can tell you that things look differently when you are in the belly of the beast rather than a friend or neighbor on the outside looking in. Without question this was a very tough State Budget to get done. No one got exactly what they wanted but no one expected that right out of the gate. I'm neither disappointed nor ecstatic with the final result. At the end of the day, I voted for this budget because it will accomplish the main objectives of what I believe you sent me to Madison for. This budget invests in the right places and with the proper amount in order to bridge the political gap between the two parties.

Below are highlights of what this budget will accomplish in the next two years and it's built around the priorities of our State:

- We continued our investment in the Healthcare Stability Plan. The program decreased private health insurance premiums by 4.2% in 2019 and by 10% from where they would have been without the program. Funding for nursing homes increased by \$30 million. This represents a 6% increase in nursing home reimbursement rates. Over the biennium we are more than doubling base funding for the direct care workforce funding initiative.
- Funding for K-12 education will increase by \$604 per student. Special education funding will increase by 22% in the second year of this budget. Student mental health service grants will have their current funding doubled.
- The Wisconsin Technical College system will see an increase of \$25 million. The Career and Technical Education grants get a \$6 million increase to give high school students more

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access to technical education courses. The UW System also sees a funding increase of over \$100 million.

- The budget increases funding for the state highway rehabilitation program by 19% to maintain road conditions and keep projects around the state on schedule. \$5 million per year was added to transportation funds for local town roads. We also added \$90 million to the Local Road Improvement Program.
- The budget increases funding for broadband by \$44 million which quadruples the amount approved in the previous state budget.

Our office successfully secured two budget motions into the final budget. Our first motion was a recommendation from the Wisconsin Historical Society to reduce 110 of their part time workers to 46 full time staffers at the Historical Society. The motion saves the tax payers over \$271,000 per year. Our second motion authorizes a new Historical Society Museum. This motion represents a smart investment especially since the Historical Society has already raised over \$30 million from private donations for the project.

I'm happy that our hard work over the last several months paid off and made it to the Governor's desk for his signature. I applaud the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau, all of the great staff in the State Capitol Building and the members of the Joint Finance Committee who worked long and hard on this budget. While the Governor's original budget proposal sounded good in a speech, it had several flaws. The Governor's budget proposal would have ended our current budget cycle with a major deficit. Our budget is balanced and it will benefit everyone in our state. I hope the Governor will see this budget as the best compromise possible and decide it is best to sign it into law.

Make it a great day!

Bob Kulp

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