

May 13 Update from DPW Chair, Martha Laning

Written by Democratic Party of Wisconsin, Martha Laning
Friday, 13 May 2016 18:59 -



MADISON - Welcome to the weekly installment of my chair update!

I am so proud of all the students graduating from college this weekend. However, this sadly reminds me of the negative impact Scott Walker and Republicans have had on the system. The last budget removed \$250 million in state aid from the UW-System forcing campuses to pass or consider passing votes of “no confidence” in the Governor’s hand-picked Board of Regents.

Russ Feingold released a new ad highlighting the false attacks from Ron Johnson’s buddies the Koch Brothers. In addition, Paul Ryan jumped on board the Trump Train and Scott Walker failed yet again to pay off Wisconsin’s bills.

And don’t forget, State Convention is only a few weeks away!

GRADUATION WEEKEND

This weekend thousands of young adults will receive their degrees and head out to the real world. For too many students though, what is supposed to be a joyous day, will be overshadowed by looming student debt.

We have to thank the wonderful professors, who have stepped up to make sure our students graduate and are prepared for the real world. They have gone above and beyond, prioritizing the well-being of their students despite Gov. Walker passing a \$250 million budget cut to public higher education and forcing schools to do more with less.

Every single branch of the UW-System is experiencing cuts between half a million dollars to as high as \$53 million dollars. It will be harder for students to graduate on time as essential classes are being cut and professors are being fired or leaving the UW-System. The situation

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has gotten so bad that faculties have held votes of “No Confidence” at multiple locations, including [UW-Eau Claire](#) , [UW-River Falls](#), [UW-La Crosse](#) , [UW-Green Bay](#) , and [UW-Milwaukee](#)

. A vote of no confidence by the faculty shows they have no faith in the direction Scott Walker and his hand-picked Board of Regents. Faculty members know what campuses and students need to prosper, and it's time Walker and Republican leaders allocated the proper resources to Wisconsin's public higher education system.

Parents will proudly watch their kids achieve a huge milestone in their lives this weekend, but I am sure many will also be wondering how their kids will fare trying to pay off their school debt while also covering living expenses. Unfortunately, Gov. Walker and Republican leaders couldn't be bothered to take up Democratic legislation that would allow students to refinance their debt the same way you can a mortgage. Senator Harsdorf refused to even take the bill up in her committee.

And what has the result been? Over one million Wisconsinites are still shoulder the burden of student loan debt.

With over \$1 billion in student debt, Wisconsin ranks 3rd nationally for the highest debt per capita; and students with high loan payments often push aside major life milestones like buying a home, a car, or even starting a family due to crushing debt. Wisconsinites deserve much better.

Democratic legislators have requested public higher education committee hearings on the budget cuts, but Republicans refuse to hold them. They refuse to acknowledge the consequences their cuts are having on the UW-System, even though they are jeopardizing the economic benefit that Wisconsin residents receive from the UW-System. Regardless of party affiliation, we deserve legislators who won't run away from our problems!

NEW RUSS AD

Yesterday, [Russ's campaign released a new ad](#) , [highlighting the false attacks](#) Ron Johnson's buddies, the Koch brothers, are running to smear Russ. The ads are so false that three TV stations decided to pull them off the air – the first time any political ad has been pulled for a false claim anywhere in the country this election cycle. Between supporting Donald Trump, refusing to do his job on SCOTUS, and allowing his special interest pals to run false attack ads, it is clear Ron Johnson needs to be replaced. Lucky for us we have Russ! Wisconsinites expect elected officials to work for their best interests, which is exactly why we are going to

elect Russ to the senate in November.

PAUL RYAN IS ALL ABOARD THE TRUMP TRAIN

When Paul Ryan was asked at the beginning of this week if he would Support Donald Trump's nomination, he said "I hope to and I want to". Yesterday, after having a private meeting with Trump, he praised the Republican's racist, sexist, and xenophobic presumed presidential nominee. Instead of denouncing Trump's hateful and divisive language, Paul Ryan is all aboard the Trump Train.

We shouldn't be surprised that Ryan won't denounce Trump and is even embracing his policies, as Ryan has his own extreme record that compliments the presumptive Republican Presidential nominee. This includes dismantling Social Security, believing Roe vs. Wade should be overturned entirely, voting for some of the 'most outrageous anti-immigrant and anti-Latino legislation', and he does not believe in raising the minimum wage. With this sort of record, it becomes abundantly clear why Paul Ryan won't denounce Donald Trump dangerous ideas – he supports them.

To make things even more interesting, Paul Ryan says Trump is a "genuine" guy. Remember Trump has said women should be punished for receiving an abortion, all Muslims should be banned from entering the country, and he would allow the United States to default on our debt, which would be an economic catastrophe. Sounds like Donald Trump would be a "genuine" disaster as President!

WISCONSIN MISSES ANOTHER DEBT PAYMENT UNDER SCOTT WALKER

Scott Walker preaches fiscal responsibility, but for a second time in as many years he has been unable to pay Wisconsin's bills - passing along millions in extra interest cost to taxpayers. In this particular instance, the Walker administration kicked a \$101 million debt bill down the road, resulting in an extra \$2.3 million in interest costs. That's \$2 million dollars wasted that we could spend on education to help our kids or \$2 million for broadband expansion in rural areas of the state. But remember, this isn't the first time Scott Walker and the Republicans have skipped a payment, as they kicked a \$100 million debt payment down the road in 2015.

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After six years of empty platitudes and broken promises it is clear the choices Republican leadership in our state have made have left Wisconsin far worse off than when Walker took office. Instead of investing in priorities that would grow Wisconsin's economy – education, workforce development, and supporting local businesses, Walker and Republican politicians gave away millions in tax breaks to special interests and the wealthy. And what have the results been? Wisconsin ranked 50th in entrepreneurship, 35th in Job Growth, and gave out 10,000 layoff notices last year. Now, once again, Wisconsin has been unable to pay its debt bill.

With Trump at the top of the ticket and Wisconsin Republicans refusing to join Democrats in common sense solutions, it is clear Wisconsin needs strong new Democratic leadership in Madison to get our house in order, and build an economy that works for everyone, not just the billionaires.

STATE CONVENTION

We are so excited for our upcoming state convention on June 3rd and 4th in Green Bay. For this event to run as smoothly as possible we need your help, so please sign up for a volunteer shift [here](#). This is going to be a great event that you are not going to want to miss. Sign up so you can see all the action click [here](#) !

Sincerely,
Martha Laning