

Democrats Standing Up for Your Values

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KENOSHA, WI - As my fellow Democrats and I speak with people around the state, people often tell us they believe “politicians don’t care about people like me.” And given what Governor Walker and Republican legislators have done over the past year – and what they have left undone – it’s not surprising that people feel that way.

First, I want to make it clear that my Democratic colleagues and I care about ordinary Wisconsinites and the issues that will build the middle class, such as education and training, job development, lower student loan debt, family leave and other important issues. We have put forward ideas and advocated for your agenda – not the extreme special-interest policies that dominate the Republican agenda.

Assembly Democrats are focused on creating jobs and strengthening our middle class, and we have brought forward numerous bills and ideas to help accomplish those goals. Our “15 for 2015” Economic Opportunity Agenda is comprised of 15 bills Democrats have introduced that are designed to help create good-paying jobs, connect workers with available jobs, increase wages and make us more competitive in a global economy. Our “Bring Back the Middle Class” package would boost retirement security and provide relief from high child-care costs and student debt. These are ideas that have broad support from our citizens, and they deserve to have bipartisan support as well.

Unfortunately, Republicans have refused to advance a single one of these bills, despite the fact that under their watch, our job growth is stalled at 37th in the nation, our middle class is shrinking faster than any other state and mass layoffs are on pace to potentially double last year’s totals. Instead, the Republicans’ number one priority is to consolidate their own power and feather their own nests, which opens Wisconsin to corruption and puts an end to clean, open and transparent government in our state.

Mounting evidence – from public opinion polls to our conversations in communities across the state – makes it clear that Wisconsinites don't trust legislative Republicans, and there are many good reasons why. Republican rule in Wisconsin has meant more money for political campaigns with less transparency and fewer tools for prosecuting political corruption. Republicans have also turned our nonpartisan government watchdogs into partisan lapdogs. Republican legislators have also harmed our economic future by cutting a quarter billion dollars from our world-class universities and diverting millions of taxpayer dollars from public schools to unaccountable private voucher schools.

Meanwhile, the governor and Republican legislators have done nothing to provide relief for the million Wisconsinites burdened by student loan debt, taken no meaningful action on job creation and economic development, and provided no solution for fixing our crumbling roads and bridges.

I believe that Wisconsin does best when we have strong public schools, a thriving university system, robust infrastructure and a prospering middle class. My colleagues and I are doing everything possible to make that vision of Wisconsin a reality.

This year, the difference between Democrats and Republicans couldn't be clearer. While legislative Republicans continue to pursue an agenda focused on helping special interests and their own self-interests, legislative Democrats will continue to advocate for the people's agenda in 2016 and beyond – but we need your help.

I encourage you to talk to your neighbors, friends and families about the direction our state is headed. Get engaged and make your voice heard. Together, we can continue to advocate a people's agenda that fosters economic opportunity and supports middle-class families struggling to get ahead.

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