

Update from DPW Chair, Martha Laning April 2

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Pledge to Vote

Vote April 4, Republican Extremism Reaches A New Low, Wisconsin Budget Process, and more...

MADISON - Welcome to the latest installment of my chair update.

Make A Plan To Vote For Tony Evers For State Superintendent In Tuesday's Spring Election

If you haven't already, it's time to make a plan to vote in one of the most important races on the ballot: Tony Evers' bid for re-election as State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Evers is the only candidate in the race for State Superintendent who is a champion for fairly funding our public schools, increasing graduation rates, and creating pathways to family-sustaining jobs for young adults.

Make sure you get out to the polls this Tuesday, April 4 and vote for Evers. Then spread the word with your network online. Remind all of your friends and family to cast a ballot today for Tony Evers for State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Learn more about Tony on his website tonyforwisconsin.com.

Learn more about what you need vote on Tuesday at <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/> .

P.S. be sure to watch and share Tony's latest television ad with your online networks. Click the screenshot below to watch the ad on Tony's YouTube page.



Republican Extremism Reaches A New Low In Wisconsin

Just when I think things can't get more extreme they do. Last week, a joint Assembly and Senate committee held a hearing on a bill to call for a constitutional convention. The last time our country had a constitutional convention was in 1787 - when our country's Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution. Ever since then, our government has used the Congressional process for making specific changes to the U.S. Constitution. There are 27 amendments to the Constitution, but now the Republicans, through shady groups like American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), are attempting to circumvent Congress by getting 34 state legislatures to pass bills calling for a constitutional convention - all to include a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. The proposal introduced in Wisconsin, written by Sen. Chris Kapenga (R-Delafield), would make our state the 30th of 34 states required for a constitutional convention to become a reality.

There is a reason why this hasn't been done since 1787 and why even extreme right-wing groups have shunned this proposal: Once a constitutional convention is called our constitution is in jeopardy as convention delegates can totally rewrite the entire Constitution, as it is not clear whether a convention summoned in this way would be legally bound to limit the discussion at the convention to a single issue. Experts suggest that such a convention would have the ability to propose anything it sees fit, which could spell disaster for civil rights, worker's rights, voting rights, women's rights, LGBT rights and all of the other important progress our country has achieved.

Very few people spoke in favor of the bill at last week's hearing. In fact, people are flabbergasted that Republican legislators are even considering such a frightening idea. Our democracy is young and to have each state writing the rules on who gets to participate is shocking. Furthermore, the Wisconsin call for a constitutional convention has partisan extremism baked right into the legislation as Assembly Speaker Robin Vos is allowed to select two delegates, the Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald is allowed to select two delegates,

the Governor selects one delegate, and one delegate is selected by Sen. Scott Fitzgerald and Rep. Peter Barca. That means nine representatives from Wisconsin would participate in the convention if it was successfully called, but only two of the state's delegates would be Democrats.

People who value freedom of speech, freedom of religion, equality in all its forms, and so many other issues should be concerned about what could happen at a constitutional convention. Furthermore, big money special interests are already looming over our political process and seek to control every level of power possible. Who knows what kind of back room deals unelected delegates would strike to remain in power and appease those special interests.

Quite frankly, Republicans should be just as concerned because we have seen in the last several months that the Republicans aren't on the same page. I think the Republican Party is lost and the fact they are introducing such a scary bill proves it.

We are watching what is happening closely and if the bill makes the schedule we will be sending an immediate call to action for all our members.

[Learn more about the bill and last week's hearing on StarTribune.com](#)

Wisconsin Budget Process Update

Members of the Joint Finance Committee completed their briefings for each state agency last week. If you have a little time on your hands, you can watch last week's hearings on [wiseeye.org](#).

This week, the hearings go on the road for six public hearings around the state on Gov. Scott Walker's state budget proposal. The first is this Monday, April 3 at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. The next hearing will be held on Wednesday, April 5 at the State Fair Park outside of Milwaukee and that will be followed by an April 7 hearing at Berlin High School.

Our Communications Department will be sending budget research, talking points, and regional information for all of you planning to attend this week's hearings. And if you can't attend they'll be sending out information to use on social media during this part of the budget process.

You can follow along with the budget process and learn more about the next steps moving forward at [The Budget Process in Wisconsin](#).

A few weeks ago I told you that I would share information on Democratic budget listening sessions once that information became available. Save the date for the first hearings held on **Saturday, April 8**

in Green Bay and Eau Claire. Details of the event are located below. We'll be sharing more dates as they become available.

Democratic Budget Hearing in Green Bay

Time: Saturday, April 8, 10 AM – 2 PM

Location: UW-Green Bay Christie Theatre (In the Student Union)
2420 Nicolet Dr, Green Bay, WI 54311

Democratic Budget Hearing in Eau Claire

Time: Saturday, April 8, 10 AM – 2 PM

Location: UW-Eau Claire Centennial Hall (Room 1614)
1698 Park Ave, Eau Claire, WI 54701

Glenn Grothman Town Hall On April 10

Congressman Glenn Grothman is holding a town hall on April 10 in Valders. If you can attend, please do so and make your voice heard on President Donald Trump's agenda, the Republican attempt to repeal health care, and other issues that matter the most to you.

Rep. Glenn Grothman Town Hall

Time: Monday, April 10, 2pm - 2pm

Location: 420 N. Liberty St. Valders, WI 54245

Democratic Weekly Radio Address: "We Need a Budget That Works for Everyone"

Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) gave the Democratic Weekly Radio Address on the Wisconsin budget and the upcoming Joint Finance hearings:

"We need a budget that creates opportunities for everyone to succeed. We need to invest in our shared success: affordable health care, good roads, better broadband, and great schools and universities," said Rep. Shankland. "I encourage you to make your voice heard – Democrats are listening!"

You can find the audio of this week's address [here](#) and the video [here](#) .

A written transcript of the address is below:

"Hi, I'm Rep. Katrina Shankland with this week's Democratic Radio Address.

"Here in Wisconsin, we're proud to be such hard-working people. We believe in opportunity, fairness, and community. But for many people across Wisconsin, they feel like no matter how hard they work, they can't get ahead. From student loan debt to the rising cost of childcare, families are struggling – and it's time to put them first with an opportunity budget that gives them a fighting chance.

"Yet Governor Walker's re-election budget demonstrates the failures of his leadership: from refusing to fix our roads long-term to weakly trying to solve a public education crisis he created, the governor's budget pits community against community, his 'go to' move.

"We need a budget that creates opportunities for everyone to succeed. We need to invest in our shared success: affordable health care, good roads, better broadband and great schools and universities."

"The next few weeks, as a member of the Joint Finance Committee, I will be traveling the state to listen to the people of Wisconsin on what matters to them when it comes to our budget. I encourage you to make your voice heard – Democrats are listening!"

Get Your Tickets For The 2017 Founder's Day Gala

With our sights set on a victorious 2018 midterm election cycle, Wisconsin Democrats will gather this May to celebrate the Democratic Party of Wisconsin's 2017 Founders Day Gala.

The evening will focus on rallying Democrats for the important races on the ballot in Wisconsin's 2018 election. Democrats and grassroots activists are excited to work towards another victory for Senator Tammy Baldwin. Sen. Baldwin was elected to the Senate on a promise to fight for an economy that works for everyone, not just the wealthiest Americans. In the Senate, she's fought tirelessly for the economic stability for Wisconsinites by introducing measures to strengthen the "Made in Wisconsin" economy by leading the Senate's Manufacturing Jobs for America campaign to pass legislation to help manufacturers grow and create jobs.

Please join us and your fellow Democrats on May 6, 2017 for our Founder's Day Gala at the

Hilton - Milwaukee City Center in Milwaukee. [Tickets are going fast, so get yours before they sell out! As always, we have a great event planned so we hope you can make it.](#)

2017 State Convention

The state and congressional district conventions are quickly approaching and I can't wait to see you all in Madison for our state convention on the 2nd and 3rd of June at the Madison Marriott West. For more information on the State Convention, how to become a delegate, and to pre-register, please visit www.wisdems.org/2017stateconvention

We are also looking for volunteers to help us make this year's convention a success. Without the help of volunteer doing things like stuffing bags, registering delegates, working the elections and a whole host of other duties, we could never pull off the two-day event. Please consider giving your fellow Democrats a hand to make this year's convention one of the best ever. Sign up to volunteer at: <http://www.wisdems.org/2017-state-convention/volunteer>

Things You May Have Missed But Need To See Now

[Tony Evers: Funding tied to 'Act 10 compliance' could unfairly affect districts](#)

State Superintendent Tony Evers said Thursday he is concerned a proposal from Gov. Scott Walker to tie more than half a billion dollars in new school funding to how much school districts' staff are paying toward their health care costs could be misapplied to districts that have cut costs. Evers told the state's budget-writing Joint Finance Committee on Thursday that he is afraid a requirement proposed by the governor in his 2017-19 spending plan, which ties the new funding to whether a district is requiring its staff to pay 12 percent toward health care costs, will be arbitrarily applied and affect more than the one or two school districts that actually do not require their staff to meet that threshold.

[GOP mega-donor Richard Uihlein backs Kevin Nicholson with \\$2 million to challenge Tammy Baldwin](#)

Baldwin campaign manager Scott Spector said: "With out-of-state millionaires and super PACs lining up to buy Wisconsin's Senate seat, Wisconsinites never have to worry about whose side Tammy is on. She has never been afraid to stand up to Washington millionaires and special interests when the best interests of Wisconsin are on the line."

[Attorney General Brad Schimel settles without fine in 3M pollution case](#)

After years of declining financial penalties for Wisconsin polluters, Republican Attorney General Brad Schimel has settled a case with no fine at all.

[Republicans, Democrats in Congress demand Great Lakes funding](#)

Saying the Trump administration's lack of funding for Great Lakes restoration is unacceptable, 63 Republicans and Democrats in the U.S. House on Thursday sent a letter to budget committee heads asking for full funding for the federal program. The letter asks for \$300 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative for fiscal year 2018, which starts in October. That's the same amount Congress approved last year. President Donald Trump included nothing in his proposed 2018 budget for Great Lakes restoration.

[Democrats in Trump territory in no mood to deal](#)

The 12 Democrats who represent House districts won by Donald Trump were supposed to be easy marks for the deal-making new president. Instead, they're giving him the stiff-arm. "I do come from a district that did flip to Trump this time, but I don't think they should be reading that as a slam dunk," said Rep. Ron Kind (D-Wis.). "I'm not going to support crazy up here."

[Republican lawmakers seek limits on school referendums](#)

School districts would no longer be able to ask voters to raise their taxes permanently and districts would lose some state funding if they exceed their state-imposed limits on raising property taxes through referendums under a package of bills Republican lawmakers are releasing this week. Legislators proposing the bills say the moves are designed to lower property taxes, keep voters from being worn down by multiple referendum campaigns and prevent special elections when turnout is low. But critics say the measures make it harder for public schools to keep up with the rising costs of educating students and could hurt school boards' ability to ensure adequate cash flow.

[Wisconsin panel sees progress, problems at Lincoln Hills youth prison](#)

Lincoln Hills has often been criticized for being a four-hour drive from offenders' homes in urban areas like Milwaukee, but Schraa said he saw some benefit to the setting. "Being in a rural setting I feel like you get an individual out of the environment where they broke the law," Schraa said. Rep. David Bowen (D-Milwaukee) said he disagreed. He noted that the northern Wisconsin facility has just one African-American staff member, even though the majority of its inmates are minorities. He and Goyke have argued for keeping offenders closer to southeastern Wisconsin in smaller facilities, an approach modeled [after the one used by Missouri](#).

[Questions about UW System foundations loom over budget deliberations](#)

Sen. Lena Taylor, D-Milwaukee, said a budget provision that would let students opt out of paying for certain fees could threaten funding for campus bus lines, potentially increasing costs for students who rely on public transportation. That proposal could also reduce support for student government and other organizations Taylor said provide a valuable service to students. "It really gives you an opportunity to learn budgeting, really run organizations and do so much," Taylor said of student government.

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