

New Business Advisory Council Outlines Steps to Grow Wisconsin Economy

Written by Democratic Party of Wisconsin, Brandon Weathersby
Friday, 12 August 2016 11:18

<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/business-people-s5.jpg>



Progressive business leaders know that good business fosters local hiring, supports Wisconsin's workforce, and ultimately increases incomes and wages for hard-working families.

MADISON - On Thursday, Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chairwoman **Martha Laning** officially announced the formation of the Party's new Wisconsin Business Advisory Council. The group is comprised of a broad spectrum of Wisconsin business leaders working to assist in correcting critical issues slowing Wisconsin's economy. The ultimate goal is to improve the everyday lives of our workforce, and entrepreneurs.



Wisconsin is home to great progressive business leaders who know that good business fosters local hiring, supports Wisconsin's workforce, and ultimately increases incomes and wages for hard-working families," said Laning on Thursday. "By bringing these leaders together to discuss critical issues, we can continue our efforts to return Wisconsin's economy to work for everyone - not just the billionaires and wealthy special interests."

The Wisconsin Business Advisory Council is a non-partisan informal advisory group, offering ideas and feedback to Democratic Party leaders and officials across the state.

The group, which is open to any business leader who is committed to supporting progressive principles in the workplace, is comprised of over twenty-five industry leaders from across Wisconsin. Some initial members include Tom Riordan President at Maple Ridge Farms, Inc and Ed Zieve President of Kees Inc.

Thus far, the council has recommended four crucial steps needed to grow our economy and put Wisconsinites back to work at well-paying jobs:

- **Investing in a strong and qualified workforce:** Wisconsin citizens must have access to a quality education to secure their own economic future. Business success requires the best and the brightest employees to build their future. Wisconsin must prioritize a return to full and fair funding of our public school system. World class University and Technical colleges require investment. Wisconsin students are a wealth of untapped talent. With education their skill would

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be unleashed to create new businesses and spur an economic resurgence in our state. The council will work to establish a development training and incentive program for our state's struggling manufacturing industry. Manufacturing must return to being Wisconsin's economic engine. Training and incentives will encourage manufacturing job creation here in our state.

- **Investing in a safe and reliable transportation infrastructure:** Maintained roads, bridges, and railways are crucial to public safety, but they're also incredibly important to running a business in Wisconsin. Poor infrastructure cripples business opportunities slowing products move to market. Furthermore, reliable public transportation options help ensure workers, in all parts of the state, can safely report to work each day.

- **Business needs reliable broadband:** It may be unbelievable to some, but there are areas of our state where businesses do not have access to reliable Internet service. Internet is required for credit card and bank transactions. Wisconsin must invest in cell phone and internet infrastructure for businesses to remain competitive.

- **Support Entrepreneurs:** 75% of all new Jobs are created by entrepreneurs and Wisconsin is dead last in the entire nation in entrepreneurial activity. Direct incentives and financial security must be developed for potential entrepreneurs to thrive. Our state must encourage and promote business development. Greater access to start-up funds and recognizing the role Wisconsin Universities plays in birthing new industries will be our first priorities.

Instead of focusing on the four basic building blocks to move Wisconsin's economy forward and improve the everyday lives of every citizen in the state, Republicans have cut educational funding, attacked workers, and trade unions. They have rewarded businesses that send jobs overseas and given taxpayer support to friends and officials tasked with business development who simply don't understand what businesses require to succeed.

"Over the last six years, businesses across Wisconsin have grown more and more concerned lack of investment in Wisconsin," said Deb Carey, Founder and President of New Glarus Brewing. "Madison leaders need to stand up and support Wisconsin residents and businesses. A thriving economy requires affordable education and internet access for everyone. Hard working Wisconsinites deserve a fighting chance to get ahead. I applaud the Democratic Party for bringing industry leaders together, and I look forward to focusing on the practical issues that will build a stronger Wisconsin."

Complete list of members of the new Wisconsin Business Council

Leonard Sobczak - President of Eastmore Real Estate

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Kyle Weathersly - President, Vliet Street Capital
John W. Miller - Venture Capitalist; Former President and CEO of Miller-St. Nazianz
Joe Messinger - Retired Banker
Dick Gallun - Retired Business Executive
Jeff Rusinow - Angel Investor
Gene Gilbert - Retired Sr. VP of Prudential Securities
Julilly Kohler - Real Estate Developer
Keith Schmitz - Public Relations Advisory, KRPR Inc.
Bill Holahan - UW Milwaukee Emeritus Professor - Economics
Lisa Laskowski - Clinical Edge, Inc.
Allison Rozek - Small Business Owner and Village of Shorewood Trustee
Phyllis Brostoff - CEO, Stowell Associates
Kevin Conroy - Founder of Exact Sciences
Mohammed Hashim - Founder of Riva Solutions
Mark Gehring - Co-founder and Chief Strategy Officer at HealthMyne
Mark Bakken - Founder and Managing partner of HealthX Ventures
Rock Mackie - Co-founder and Chairman of TomoTherapy
Joel Rogers - UW-Madison & COWS
Deb Carey - New Glarus Brewing Co.
Irene Clark - Invariant LLC
Aaron Olver - Managing Director, University Research Park
Dick Cates - Co-Owner Cates Family Farm LLC
Renea Frederick - FreMarq Innovations Inc.
Todd Frederick - FreMarq Innovations Inc.
Ed Zieve - Owner of Kees Inc.
Russell Doane - Chippewa Valley Bean Co.