

February 15th Update From The DPW Chair

Written by Democratic Party of Wisconsin, Martha Laning

Tuesday, 16 February 2016 11:35 - Last Updated Tuesday, 16 February 2016 11:51



MADISON - Last week was an outstanding time to be a Democrat in Wisconsin. All eyes were on Milwaukee for the Democratic debate, but it was the enthusiasm, energy, and support of people just like you who helped make the event special. Thank you.

In this update, I'll talk about last week's debate, announce more new hires to the WisDems team, remind you to vote in Tuesday's Spring Primary elections, make you aware of important bills moving through the legislature this week, and comment on the recent resignation of the Secretary of Corrections, Ed Wall.

Enjoy!

Milwaukee Democratic Debate

I can't tell you how thrilled I was to have Wisconsin host the sixth Democratic primary debate last Thursday in Milwaukee. We heard from two outstanding candidates in Secretary Clinton and Senator Sanders who outlined their vision to build on President Obama's successes and keep our nation moving forward.

Again, I want to thank you for your help with telling the story of Republican leadership here in Wisconsin. We've seen first-hand how Republican promises come up short and turn into policy that costs jobs and shrinks the middle class. No one is more equipped to tell such a cautionary tale than the people of Wisconsin.

A Note About Debate Tickets

Having the opportunity to host two outstanding presidential Democratic candidates right here in Wisconsin was an honor – and drew incredible interest from across the state.

Tickets for the debate were given to the network, their sponsors, the DNC and the presidential campaigns themselves.

The Democratic Party of Wisconsin was fortunate enough to receive a small number of tickets as well, which we worked to distribute as fairly as possible to our Democratic elected officials, county party leaders, progressive partners who help us get our message out, and party members and grassroots activists from around the state. We also did a small drawing to ensure members of the public had a chance to attend.

We received over 5,000 requests for tickets to the debate, but ultimately, due the small size of the venue (only about 600 seats total due to cameras and press), we could only accommodate a fraction of those who wanted to attend. It was very exciting to see such enthusiasm across Wisconsin, but also put us in the unfortunate position of disappointing many hard working

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Democrats.

New Hires at the Democratic Party of Wisconsin

Not a day goes by where we aren't assembling the best team in the business to help us win in November. This week, we welcomed Matt Phelan and Breianna Hasenzahl-Reeder to our growing team.

Matt Phelan is our new Deputy Finance Director and will be primarily responsible with assisting the Finance Director in achieving the department's goals.

Breianna Hasenzahl-Reeder is our new Compliance Director and will be primarily in charge of oversight and management of compliance reporting and ensuring we are in compliance with applicable state and federal reporting requirements.

Spring Primary Elections

Remember to vote in today's spring elections featuring a very important race to elect a new member to the state Supreme Court.

This is the first election featuring our state's new photo ID law. [Click here to make sure you have what you need to make your voice heard.](#)

Special Registration Deputies

Tomorrow, the Assembly is set to pass a bill eliminating Special Registration Deputies (SB 295). Special Registration Deputies (SRDs) are individuals who apply and are accepted to be register voters by municipal clerks.

SB 295 would eliminate SRDs and prohibit the use of SRDs from conducting voter registration drives.

While SB 295 gives voters the option to register to vote online, it is not worth taking away the assistance provided by SRDs for both voters without internet access and the municipal clerks who rely on their help.

Please, help us protect voting rights in Wisconsin. [Click here to find your local legislator's contact information and tell them to vote NO on SB 295.](#)

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Bills To Watch In The Assembly And Senate This Week

Remember to [call and email your legislator](#) about the issues you care about.

Assembly Highlights:

- AB 707: Bill to create a specific logo for Veteran owned businesses.

Assembly Lowlights:

- AB 581: Bill to create licenses to teach vocational educational subjects. This bill lowers standards within the teaching profession and will allow people to teach without proper training.
- AB751: Bill to create special needs scholarship program. This bill's admendments effectively cuts the amount of money public schools can use by 14 million.
- AB 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744: Governor Scott Walker's student loan debt plan. This package of bills isn't nearly enough. Student loan debt in Wisocnsin is an epidemic and these bills don't even begin to take the problem seriously. Any first step in tackling student loan debt should include the ability for borrowers to refinance their loans like their home or their car.
- AB 533: Bill to create criminal penalties for fraud in obtaining unemployment insurance benefits.
- AB 640: Bill to regulate aquaculture and fish farms. This bill does not have enough wetland protections and could conflict with federal law on wetland protections.

Senate Highlights:

- AB 628: Bill to suspend, revoke, or refuse to renew cigarette and tobacco products retailer licenses. This bill allwos municipalities to shut down bad operators selling cigarettes and tobacco products.

Senate Lowlights:

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- SB 459 & AB 582: Bill to regulate navigable waters and wetlands and; Bill to change shoreland zoning. These bills would give away public lake beds to developers for free and restrict public access for the people of Wisconsin. Additionally, it gives incentive to destroy wetlands that are not under federal protection
 - SB 707: Bill to prohibit a legislator from concurrently holding office as a county executive. Republicans are trying to change the rules of the game in an election year so they don't have to face the voters on a level playing field.
 - AB 568: Bill to make changes to laws relating to landlords and tenants. This bill makes it easier to evict tenants and future hampers people's ability to find affordable housing.
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Resignation of Secretary Ed Wall

Last week, Department of Corrections Secretary Ed Wall's resignation was made public as new information came to light regarding the reports of child abuse and sexual assault that occurred in his Department of Corrections.

I was shocked to hear the horrific stories that surfaced last December after officials from the Department of Justice conducted a raid on the juvenile corrections facility, the Lincoln Hills School for Boys.

As both a citizen and a mother I think its incredibly important we protect our most vulnerable Wisconsinites and give them the opportunity to reform their young lives.

News reports show that Gov. Walker and his top aides ignored critical safety warnings on Lincoln Hills for more than five years. Sec. Wall's resignation doesn't change the fact that more individuals in Walker's administration need to be held accountable and that more action should be taken by Legislature to hold hearings on the safety and treatment of children at Lincoln Hills.

The Democratic Party of Wisconsin will continue to work to hold this administration responsible and promote the good work done by Democrats in the legislature to reform our state's corrections system.