http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/uwgb-students-s5.jpg

Gov. Walker talked this week about "working and winning", but his plan is to continue borrowing and raiding Peter to pay Paul. Our priority must be Wisconsin's roads, schools and jobs. Wisconsinites never have, and never will stop putting in a hard day's work.

MADISON - In the depths of the great depression, President Roosevelt warned against becoming cold-hearted, cautioned against indifference and reminded Americans that they were called to save something great and precious for the nation and its future. And they answered the call.

The nation came together. People didn't look at their neighbors who were marginally better off than them with resentment. Instead of dragging people down, they worked to make the future better for not only their families, but for everyone who got up and went to work each day. And we inherited a better nation.

The men and women who grew up during the great depression and went on to serve in World War II are often referred to as the greatest generation. The spirit of the greatest generation is alive and well in Northern Wisconsin. Our friends and neighbors here will always pride themselves on delivering a job seen-through and well-done. I think they would agree, as I do, that we should be rewarding work.

During his budget address this week, the Governor kept using the phrase "we are working and winning for Wisconsin." I think he said it 9 times. I know we're working.

The Governor, after three budgets of spending our tax dollars elsewhere, wants to put a little more money in to our local schools, send a few more dollars to local units of government for

roads and make some modest investments in Broadband and other infrastructure improvements.

Will that help us win? Without a solution to Wisconsin's long-term transportation challenge, our roads will continue to deteriorate. Governor Walker offered no solution, his plan is to continue borrowing and raiding Peter to pay Paul. Soon, nearly 50% of our roads will be in disrepair and debt costs will eat up more than a quarter of our transportation spending.

One of the cornerstones of successful economies is an educated workforce. The Governor's budget does nothing to fix the outdated and unfair funding formula for public schools. Instead of rewarding or even requiring work, his budget demands even less of voucher school operators who are taking resources directly out of our public schools.

Large tax breaks for the wealthy haven't produced more jobs. The Republican Majority Leader of the Senate described one of the Governor's proposals as "a meager income tax reduction, I think we've been down that path before and it's resulted in not enough bang for the buck." I think that's an apt description for the Governor's whole approach. We need to do better. We can do better.

Our priority must be Wisconsin's roads, schools and jobs. Wisconsinites never have, and never will stop putting in a hard day's work. It's time to put people who work for a living first. It's time to reward work again.

The budget address was the first step in a months-long process. The legislature's budget-writing Joint Finance Committee will begin public hearings after a non-partisan analysis of the bill is completed. I will be holding listening sessions in Northern Wisconsin. And I will follow up on this column with more detail in the weeks and months to come.