

June 29, 2007

Your *Action* Needed on State Budget

In every odd-numbered year the State of Wisconsin adopts a two-year budget. The process for the budget that runs July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2009 is reaching its peak.

The State Senate passed the 2007-09 budget on June 26th. The budget now moves to the State Assembly.

NOW IS THE TIME TO LET YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVES KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT CERTAIN BUDGET MATTERS.

Several steps toward passing a budget have happened:

- The Governor submitted his proposed budget to the Legislature.
- The Joint Finance Committee modified the Governor's proposal and passed its version of the budget.
- The Senate has passed yet another version of the budget (that is three budgets, so far, for those keeping count).

What's next?

- The State Assembly will receive the Senate's budget, amend it, and pass its own version of the 2007-09 budget.
- If the Assembly does not pass the Senate's version of the budget, the two versions of the 2007-09 budget are reviewed and a compromise is reached by the Conference Committee which is made up of leaders from each house.
- The Governor will have an option to "veto" portions of or the entire budget after the two houses pass the Conference Committee's version.

Where the process is now:

Now is the Assembly's turn to review and modify the budget. Though they may pass it quickly, it is still important to let your Assembly member know what you would like them to do. If they have finished with the budget by the time you receive this, your Senate and Assembly members can still communicate with their colleagues on the Conference Committee about priorities.

Issues that need advocacy now

Several specific budget items need attention to remain or be put back in the budget. Choose an issue or two and let your legislators know that the issue(s) is a priority to you:

Health Care Reform

You may have seen coverage of the health care reform package included in the Senate's version of the state budget. This package is a very significant, comprehensive reform plan. You can learn more about the details at www.citizenactionwi.org.

Most observers and legislative leaders expect this to be removed from the Assembly version of the budget. Yet we cannot ignore the significance of such a major reform passing the State Senate. This is a big step toward all Wisconsin residents having health care coverage. The Interfaith Conference has not been able to fully study the reform package, but we believe it is important to continue

emphasizing to legislators that we must find a way to cover everyone.

W-2 Program

We strongly support eligibility for women in their third trimester of pregnancy who have medically-fragile pregnancies. Today they are not eligible for financial support. The Governor included this in his proposed budget, it was eliminated in Finance but is now back. We need to encourage the Assembly to keep this provision in the budget.

We also support the "Real Work for Real Pay" proposal. This pilot project will allow some participants to have an actual work experience that will be far more beneficial than W-2 community service jobs. This common sense initiative is vulnerable.

See back page for update on other issues

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Other issues CAN followed in the budget process:

Affordable Housing

A provision proposed by the Governor that would have allowed local Tax Incremental Financing Districts to be extended in order to support affordable housing efforts was not included in the Joint Finance or Senate versions of the budget. The proposal to create a statewide housing trust fund (to support current housing programs, not create something new) was also removed.

Treatment Instead of Prison

The budget continues this program and provides a modest increase in funding. Advocates supported a significant increase in funding.

Child Care

Some of the most remarkable action in Joint Finance happened around the issue of assistance to those who need help affording child care in order to go to work. The Governor's administration had proposed waiting lists for child care, reduced payments to providers, and increased co-payments from parents. Most of the particularly burdensome proposals were scrapped. Funds were moved from various pots in order to sufficiently fund this program. Contact your State Representative to encourage them to keep this in the budget.

Special Event

Join other CAN members for WI health care reform information, discussion and chicken wings before a screening of the new Michael Moore film *Sicko*.

Sicko examines the health care industry in The United States. While we are yet to review this film, we expect it to be provocative and a great discussion starter.

Prior to the movie, CAN members will hear from a local health care reform expert and have an opportunity for discussion and Q&A about health care reform in Wisconsin. We will then walk to the Oriental where we will have a block of tickets available.

Thursday, July 12th
5:30—6:45 p.m. speaker and Q&A
WOW Café and Wingery
2116 N. Farwell Ave.

7:00pm Showing
Oriental Theater
2230 N. Farwell Ave.
(Approx. 2 blocks from WOW)

Contact Nicole Carver to reserve a \$7.00 ticket
414-276-9050
nicolec@interfaithconference.org

Contacting State Elected Officials

Legislative Hotline: 1-800-362-9472

(can get you direct numbers, tell you who your legislators are, take messages for legislators)

Senators: P.O. Box 7882, Madison 53707

State Reps: P.O. Box 8952 (Rep's last names A-L)
P.O. Box 8953 (Rep's last names M-Z)
Madison 53708

To find email addresses (or to identify your representatives in Madison) visit:

www.legis.state.wi.us

Governor Jim Doyle:
P.O. Box 7863
Madison, WI 53702
1-608-266-1212

