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ASSEMBLY PUTS THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON 2007-08 SESSION

Assembly Republicans make important progress on Tax Relief, Health Care Reform, Economic Development and changing the way Madison does business.

Madison... This Thursday, March 13 is the final day of the state Legislature's 2007-08 floor session. According to Assembly Speaker Mike Huebsch (R-West Salem), the Republican Assembly made historic progress on a wide range of important issues to Wisconsin families, businesses, Seniors and Veterans.

"Last election," Huebsch said, "the voters of Wisconsin gave us an important task and an interesting challenge: they wanted reform, progress and responsibility, and they wanted it done with a split Legislature. Even with a Republican Assembly and Democrat Senate, we made tremendous progress on important issues for the people of Wisconsin."

According to Huebsch, the Legislature hit the ground running in January of 2007 with the quick passage of a historic bill to strengthen the state's ethics and elections laws, establishing Wisconsin once again at the forefront of clean government with some of the strictest ethics laws of any state. The state Assembly built on that success early in the session, quickly passing reforms to end the sick leave benefit for elected officials and eliminate the governor's "Frankenstein Veto" power.

The Legislature approved record support for K-12 education, almost \$12.29 billion over the next two years, as well as a significant investment in the University of Wisconsin system, financial aid for college students and an expansion of the college tuition tax deduction to make higher education more affordable for families.

For Wisconsin's Seniors, Republicans fought to save the state's popular SeniorCare prescription drug program, and made retirement income tax-exempt.

Instead of simply treating the symptoms of the health care crisis or throwing more money at the problem, Assembly Republicans passed real-world reforms to remove the anxiety that goes along with health care. Republicans worked with both sides of the aisle and both houses of the Legislature to pass improved health care programs for children, Seniors and low-income families as part of the budget. Assembly Republicans addressed the core problems with America's health care system by passing initiatives for workplace

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wellness programs, making health care more affordable with a tax deduction for health insurance premiums, pushing 21st century medical technology and putting patients in charge of their own health care dollars and decisions with price disclosure and market-based reforms including Health Savings Accounts. Huebsch noted that unlike the Senate Democrats' proposal for government-run health care, the Assembly Republican plan passed on strong bipartisan votes.

To address concerns about the struggling economy, Republicans worked closely with Governor Doyle to pass a strong economic development agenda. The Assembly passed an expansion of the state's Angel Investment program for start-up businesses, eliminated the tax on Capital Gains if that money is re-invested in a Wisconsin business and passed incentives for businesses to invest in research and development in agriculture and biofuels. Other initiatives helped spur the emerging technologies of biotechnology and nanotechnology, and an Education Tax Credit will help businesses invest in their most valuable resource: their employees

Most importantly, according to Huebsch, Republicans managed to hold the line on spending and turn back what would have been the biggest tax increase in the history of the state, a Democrat proposal that would have skyrocketed Wisconsin to the highest-taxed state in the country. Republicans pushed toward the opposite direction, and actually achieved targeted tax cuts for Wisconsin families and small businesses in the form of a tax deduction for health insurance premiums and child care expenses, a two-year property tax freeze and a landmark tax exemption for Seniors' retirement income.

"I'd like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their hours, weeks and months of hard work and dedication to the people of Wisconsin," Huebsch said. "Being a part-time Legislature means taking time away from our families, friends, jobs and other responsibilities, but I truly believe the progress we made this year has made Wisconsin a better place to live."

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