



# JOEL KLEEFISCH

STATE REPRESENTATIVE



By JOEL KLEEFISCH

Madison – The Department of Administration announced on Monday that the state finished the fiscal year with a surplus of \$342 million. Governor Walker promptly deposited \$108.7 million of that in the state’s rainy day fund – the largest such deposit ever.

Do we really need to keep pointing out the obvious?

The fiscal reforms that we instituted beginning with Act 10 and continuing with the 2011-’13 budget have turned the state around so drastically that other states should now be using Wisconsin as their model on how to budget.

We turned Wisconsin around from a state that had one of the biggest per-capita deficits into a state with a healthy surplus. We turned Wisconsin into a model of fiscal responsibility. We turned Wisconsin into ... the envy of so many other states’ governors and legislatures.

What a difference two years make.

Remember when we took control in January of 2011? Remember a \$3.6-billion – that’s with a “B” – deficit? Remember how we owed Minnesota \$60 million for a reciprocity deal that we weren’t paying off? Remember how we owed \$200 million to the state’s patient compensation fund? Those black marks on Wisconsin are gone – just bad memories.

Today the future is bright for Wisconsin. While our federal government owes some \$16 trillion – nearly \$60,000 for every man, woman and child in our country – Wisconsin has removed the burden of debt and deficit from the backs of our future generations.

Meanwhile, California has a deficit of \$16 billion. And Illinois is much worse. After raising taxes through the roof and doing pretty much the opposite of what we did here in Wisconsin, our neighbors to the south have a deficit of nearly \$44 billion – again, that’s with a “B.”

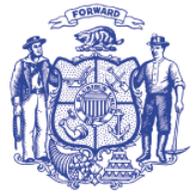
Over the summer, Illinois State Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka uttered this priceless quote to a reporter: “Being the chief fiscal officer in Illinois right now is like being one of your obituary writers at the newspaper, because I’ve only got bad news to report all the time.”

Meanwhile, we just recorded a \$342 million surplus – something that should have been trumpeted but only merited four paragraphs buried in the “Regional Newswatch” of the B Section in the Oct. 16 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Seriously? I would think that bit of news would interest a great many readers. Don’t worry, though. The Journal Sentinel did run a full five paragraphs on its Website.



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The Wisconsin State Journal wasn't any better, finding the story worthy of just four paragraphs from the Associated Press both in the paper and on the Website.

Not that we do what we do to receive credit. We enacted the measures that led to this great news because it was the right thing to do. Wisconsin is climbing the charts again; we're creating jobs; we're making Wisconsin a good place to do business again.

We could have raised taxes through the roof, harming Wisconsin businesses and families. We could have delayed, hoping someone else would make the tough decisions some years down the road. We could have allowed the irresponsible spending to go on. Instead, we did what we were sent here to do.

Wisconsin is now the model.