

THE WHEELER REPORT
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Wednesday, July 25, 2007 – PM

BUDGET CONFEREES TALK, BUT REACH NO AGREEMENTS

The Senate/Assembly conferees on the budget spent 2.5 hours at the table on Wednesday, but reached no agreements on any of the hundreds of items separating the two houses. The committee adjourned without setting a date for its next session. Speaker Huebsch will call the next meeting and was meeting with other Republicans late Wednesday afternoon to decide when that would be, but it was not expected to be this week.

After discussing general points, Senate Democrats proposed approval of all items approved 16-0 by the Finance Committee, then reduced the proposal to three items. But Speaker Huebsch said he was not going to approve any items until both sides agreed on how much money the committee will spend overall. He did agree to review the list of 16-0 items prepared by the Fiscal Bureau. ([The list includes all votes of 12-4 and up to 16-0](#))

The three items Democrats suggested could be approved were:

- **The Veterans Package**, which focuses mainly on the veteran's tuition remission and surviving spouse tuition remission, but includes several other items. Both houses made identical changes to the tuition remission and surviving spouse provisions when they considered the bill. (*The Veterans Package was included in Motion 63, which was co-sponsored by all members of the Finance Committee and which was adopted, 16-0*)
- **Domestic Abuse Grants**. The Senate adopted the Finance language, but the Assembly reduced funding. (*Included in Motion 152, adopted 14-2*)
- **Infant Mortality Project**. The Senate approved the Finance language, but the Assembly deleted the provision providing \$500,000 for the project in Racine County. (*Motion 268, adopted 16-0*)

Sen. Robson, noting it was the start of a "big, long, next step" in the "long budget process," emphasized Democrats' Healthy Wisconsin health insurance program, calling the cost of health insurance "the biggest economic problem" facing local government, school boards and business.

Speaker Huebsch, opening for the Republicans, said the budget must be designed to "live within the means of taxpayers," saying Wisconsin residents are "taxed too much." He said the two sides have "a long way to go to bridge the gap between us," suggesting there was a \$10 billion spending gap.

INTRODUCED IN THE SENATE

SJR-53. (Kapanke) 75th Anniversary of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. *To Senate Organization.*

SJR-54. (Breske) Honors centennial of United Parcel service of America. *To Senate Organization.*

SB-245. Gift Certificates (Carpenter) Regulates terms and conditions of gift certificates, gift cards, and other gift obligations. *To Small Business, etc.*

SB-246. Mental Health Professionals (Miller) Mental health professionals providing outpatient services for the treatment of nervous and mental conditions and alcoholism and other drug abuse problems or who, under MA, provide psychotherapy and alcohol or other drug abuse services; exemption for certain MA benefits from physician prescription requirements. *To Health and Human Services.*

SB-247. Sexual Contact (Schultz) Penalty for sexual contact with a corpse and disturbing a burial site. *To Judiciary and Corrections.*

ACTION BY JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE

Dept. of Commerce. Report from Secretary pertaining to the allocation of \$7.5 million in Internet equipment tax credits and exemptions. *No objections filed. Plan is approved.*

NOTICE

Senate Veterans and Military Affairs, Biotechnology and Financial Institutions, 10 am, Wed, Aug 1, 400-SE.

Public Hearing On:

[AB-270](#). (Musser) Changes membership on the Council on Veterans Programs.

[SB-192](#). (Sullivan) Provides financial aid to military families, creates an individual income tax checkoff for the military family relief fund, provides an exemption from emergency rule procedures.

[SB-143](#). (Sullivan) Changes membership on the Council on Veterans Programs.

[SB-109](#). (Hansen) Requires all employers grant a paid leave of absence on Veterans day to employees who are veterans.

Public Hearing and Executive Session On:

Appointment

Banking Review Board – Douglas Farmer.

[Link to Releases.](#)

Legislators and Legislative Issues.

[Rep. Lasee](#). Weekly Notes.

[Rep. Sheridan](#). Applauds grant approval for *Safe Roads to School Project*.

[Sen. Lassa](#). Testifies on Special Olympics legislation.

[Wisconsin State Journal](#). Albers investigated by Ethics Board in 2004.

[Wisconsin State Journal](#). Legislator takes aim at UW programs.

Budget.

[Sen. Fitzgerald](#). Democrats not ready to discuss health care.

[WI Health Project](#). Statement on teacher exemption criticism of Healthy Wisconsin proposal.

[Americans for Prosperity - WI](#). To highlight state budget and Healthy Wisconsin at hearings.

[Citizen Action of Wisconsin](#). To hold Green Bay forum on Senate health care plan tonight.

[Citizen Action of Wisconsin](#). Healthy Wisconsin being attacked by extreme right wing group.

[Wisconsin Catholic Conference](#). Memo to budget conference committee concerning budget issues.

[Unite Here](#). New report reveals significant tax exemptions, low charity care numbers for wealthy Madison hospital. [The Report](#).

[Wisconsin Values](#). Organizations gather at the Capitol to urge that Wisconsin values be included in the state budget.

[Wisconsin Counties Association](#). eNews: Comprehensive analysis on Assembly budget, other stories.

[Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association](#). Wisconsin has lowest annual user fee cost to drive in Midwest. [Comparison](#).

[State Bar of Wisconsin](#). Urges budget conferees to make access to justice a Wisconsin priority.

[Green Bay Press Gazette](#). Wisconsin Covenant gives kids reason to believe.

[RiverTowns.net](#). Rhoades has major part in budget work -- again.

[The Capital Times](#). Poll says Wisconsin wants universal care. [Lake Research Partners survey](#).

State Officials.

[Governor Doyle](#). Announces over \$7 million to benefit homeless people.

[Lt. Governor Lawton](#). To take lead on climate change, energy independence.

Agencies

[Dept. of Commerce](#). **Governor Doyle announces 10-year plan to end homelessness in Wisconsin. [Wisconsin Radio Network story](#).**

[DNR](#). Mild winter expected to result in above average deer population growth.

[DNR](#). Public hearings set on 2007 Wisconsin waterfowl hunting seasons.

[Wisconsin Dept. of Veterans Affairs](#). Purple Heart Day August 7th [Flyer](#).

[DWD](#). June 2007 local unemployment rates.

Statewide Issues.

[Wisconsin Council on Children and Families](#). New report shows greater access to family supporting jobs needed. (Kids Count) [Wisconsin State Journal story](#).
[Wisconsin State Journal](#). Panel aims to cut number of minorities in state prisons.
[La Crosse Tribune](#). Hearing set in right-to-die case.

Education

[UW Milwaukee](#). Wisconsin's senior residents audit classes free at UWM.
[UW Madison](#). Receives academic technology excellence award.
[Wisconsin State Journal](#). Editorial. Give merit pay to best teachers.
[Tomah Journal](#). Projected school tax increase shrinks.

Audit Bureau Report on Prosecutors.

[Association of State Prosecutors](#). Response to Legislative Audit Bureau report.
[Attorney General Van Hollen](#). Response to Legislative Audit Bureau report.
[Wisconsin District Attorneys Association](#). LAB audit of District Attorney Program now published.
[Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault](#). LAB audit demonstrates need for more district attorneys.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#). Audit finds state short 117 prosecutors.
[Green Bay Press Gazette](#). Audit says Brown County DA's office overwhelmed.
[Sheboygan Press](#). Audit: Four additional prosecutors needed.

Energy/Environment

[PRNewswire](#). **Invenenergy's Forward Energy Wind Project in Wisconsin to proceed with construction.**
[Dodge County Circuit Court](#). **Judge John R. Storck's decision in Horicon Marsh Systems Advocates, et al. v. Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (adopted by Appeals Court as its decision in this case).**

[PRNewswire](#). Toyota brings 'Highway to the Future: Mobile Hybrid Experience' to the Wisconsin State Fair.
[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#). Utility sells 7400 acres.
[La Crosse Tribune](#). New high-voltage line to La Crosse proposed.
[The Capital Times](#). Middleton wind firm hits for power.
[Eau Claire Leader Telegram](#). Pricey profit. Farmers' property taxes could rise like corn costs.

Organizations.

[Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors Association; Master Plumber Association](#). Name executive director.

Business

[Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation](#). **Files disclosure with US Patent Office to provide additional information about experts cited by challengers of stem cell patents.** [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel story](#).

[New North](#). Healthcare company recognized as leader.
[AT&T](#). Announces \$900,000 contribution to Mayo Clinic supporting research leading to personalized medicine.
[PRNewswire](#). Travel+Leisure names Midwest Airlines "World's Best Domestic Airline" for eighth time.
[Manitowoc Herald Times Reporter](#). Packers' economic impact packs a heavy punch.

Obituary.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#). Food Critic Dennis Getto.

Local Officials and Issues.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#). Milwaukee Area Technical College contract gives pay raises.
[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#). Milwaukee Public Schools closes 25 athletic fields.
[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#). Waukesha County non-profits say merger is official.
[La Crosse Tribune](#). Onalaska Plan Commission OKs electronic sign ordinance.
[Appleton Post Crescent](#). Outagamie rejects supervisor pay raise.

[Manitowoc Herald Times Reporter](#). County Board to vote to override veto (HCC).

[Oshkosh Northwestern](#). Winnebago County Board rules dogs must be leashed on county trails.

[Marshfield News Herald](#). Council delays decision on smoking ban.

Congress.

[Rep. Moore](#). Statement on minimum wage increase.

[Rep. Moore](#). Announce \$600,000 to boost inner-city entrepreneurs and bus system in Milwaukee.

[Rep. Moore](#). Statement on House passage of no permanent bases in Iraq legislation.

[Rep. Sensenbrenner](#). Calls Judiciary Committee hearing "unnecessary escalation."

[Rep. Baldwin](#). Secures funds for airport and foodbank.

[Sen. Feingold](#). Introduces legislation to reaffirm Clean Water Act.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#). Kind, Ryan offer farm plan.

[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#). Editorial: Farm bill: Let's define "reform."

(END)