

May 10, 2012

Mayor Tom Barrett
Barrett for Wisconsin
135 West Wells Street, #540
Milwaukee, WI 53203

Mayor Barrett:

Due to your victory this past week, Wisconsin voters will once again have a clear choice before them. While congratulations are in order for your win in the Democrat primary, we feel it's also necessary as the co-chairs of the Committee on Joint Finance to inquire about your financial plan for the State of Wisconsin. Throughout your campaign and during the recall efforts, you have shown your opposition to the necessary reforms that laid the solid financial foundation for our state's future. You've also said you'd reinstate collective bargaining for public sector workers. We would like to know the specifics of your plan to balance the state's budget, fund public schools and provide for medical care for the poor.

If you don't have a comprehensive fiscal proposal for the future, then perhaps you could answer how you would have turned the state around this past legislative session. We worked tirelessly to eliminate the \$3.6 billion deficit that the former administration left us. How would you have eliminated the chronic budget deficits that have crippled our state for almost a decade?

Would you have raised taxes and cut programs – or both - to close the \$3.6 billion deficit?

You have been critical of the property tax caps that actually reduced property taxes for the average home owner for the first time in over a decade. Would you repeal these caps and increase the property tax burden on families, seniors and job creators?

You have frequently alluded to your intentions to rescind the tax incentives for job creators. The only specific you've mentioned is that you would repeal the changes made to combined reporting. As this item has a minimal impact on the state budget, roughly \$9.2 million in 2011-2012 and \$37.2 million for 2012-2013, what other job creating measures do you plan to repeal if you're elected governor?

Will you repeal Wisconsin Act 1 that allows for tax relief on employees and employers who contribute to Health Savings Accounts? Will you rescind the Domestic Production Tax Credit for Manufacturing? Wisconsin depends on manufacturing almost more than any other state in the nation, and this credit encourages the creation of good-paying manufacturing jobs. Wisconsin is now ranked in the top ten in the nation for manufacturing job creation.

Would you have invested \$1.2 billion in Medicaid like we did?

Under your watch how would you deal with the exploding costs of medical coverage for our most needy citizens? Would you continue down the path laid by former Governor Doyle and leave the state with a

\$1.8 billion shortfall for Medicaid? Do you agree that the \$1.2 billion influx of funds to Medicaid under Governor Walker's budget was the right decision?

How would you have funded K-12 education?

With few specifics, you have said you would fund education differently. Governor Walker and legislative leaders passed a budget that included tools that now allow local school boards to better manage their budgets and offset any reductions in funding.

Now that these tools have helped save more than a billion dollars for taxpayers, at what level would you have funded our state's educational system and what programs would you have cut in order to keep collective bargaining for public sector employees?

Even with the abbreviated election cycle, Wisconsin voters deserve to know your financial plans for our state. This next election is about more than rhetoric; it's about the fiscal future of Wisconsin. Every one of these questions we posed should be answered honestly with great detail. Along with the voters of Wisconsin, we look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,



Senator Alberta Darling
Senate Co-Chair
Committee on Joint Finance



Representative Robin J. Vos
Assembly Co-Chair
Committee on Joint Finance