

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 17, 2003

Ellis, Cowles Call for Swift Action, Compromise on State Budget

It's time for Governor Jim Doyle and legislative leaders to stop the partisan rhetoric and to work seriously and civilly to hammer out a reasonable compromise on the state budget, state Senators Michael Ellis and Rob Cowles said today.

In a letter to Governor Doyle, Senate Majority Leader Mary Panzer and Assembly Speaker John Gard, Ellis urged the three leaders to "stop the shouting and start the talking."

Ellis noted that by introducing his budget, the Governor had essentially staked out the Democrat position on the budget, and with recent passage of the Joint Finance Committee's budget, the Republican-led legislature has essentially staked out the Republican position. Now is the time to work out a compromise that both Democrats and Republicans can vote for.

Cowles and Ellis both said the compromise should be hammered out now and that a lengthy process of legislative action followed by a veto review and then a legislative review of those vetoes should be avoided.

"We need to cut the deal now and avoid a long, hot summer of partisan bickering," Cowles said.

A bipartisan compromise is essential, Ellis said. "Both parties had a hand in the creation of our fiscal crisis and neither party should be immune from having to put their hand over the burner of deficit reduction.

"We don't agree with every aspect of the Republican Finance Committee's budget any more than every Democrat agrees with every aspect of the Governor's budget," said Ellis and Cowles. "The fact is, there is no good solution to this mess and each of us will have to swallow hard the bitter medicine required to regain our fiscal health."

Ellis called on the three to get together and work out a compromise. The compromise should include assurances that the legislature will not back out on any components critical to the compromise and that the Governor will not veto those provisions either.

(more)

Ellis, Cowles urge swift budget action
Page 2

“Ultimately, we must pass a budget that will resolve our fiscal crisis and set us once again on a course economic health and prosperity,” said Ellis. “The citizens, businesses and local government officials of Wisconsin deserve nothing less from us. It’s time to set aside the finger-pointing and partisan rhetoric. It is time to get down to the business of governing responsibly.”