

June 17, 2003

The Honorable Jim Doyle
Governor, State of Wisconsin

The Honorable Mary Panzer
Majority Leader, Wisconsin State Senate

The Honorable John Gard
Speaker, Wisconsin State Assembly

Dear Governor Doyle, Majority Leader Panzer and Speaker Gard:

I am calling on each of you today to stop the shouting and start the talking, to work together to achieve a workable compromise on the state budget. Respectfully, but frankly, you owe this to the people of Wisconsin.

When the Governor introduced his budget in February, he in essence staked out the Democrat position, although not all Democrats embraced every item in his budget. When the Joint Finance Committee completed action on its version of the budget this month, it in essence staked out the Republican-led legislative position, although not all members of either majority caucus fully embrace every item in the JFC proposal.

It is time to seriously and civilly hammer out a compromise. Shouting back and forth at each other through the newspapers will not resolve the people's budget. This crisis is real and the time for action is here. We simply cannot let this go through the lengthy process of legislative action, then veto review, and then a legislative review of the vetoes. We cannot let this drag on with partisan sniping throughout the summer. Now, not later, is the time for compromise.

I am asking each of you to sit down together and work out a compromise we all can live with. I ask you to put together a plan that includes promises by the legislative leaders and promises by the Governor not to go back on and not to veto the critical components of the compromise.

This compromise should be a proposal that can garner votes from both Republicans and Democrats in both houses of the legislature. There is no good and palatable solution to

Page 2

our fiscal crisis. Both parties had a hand in its creation and neither party should be immune from having to put their hand over the burner of deficit reduction. This problem demands a bipartisan solution.

Ultimately, we must pass a budget that will resolve our fiscal crisis and set us once again on a course of economic health and prosperity. 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.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL G. ELLIS
State Senator