

Statement by REPRESENTATIVE MARK GUNDRUM
Re: Attorney General race

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For Immediate Release

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They say politics is all about timing. Sometimes, however, the political timing may be right, but the personal timing wrong. That is the situation I find myself in.

With the birth of our 5th child two week's ago – all age seven and younger – it has become quite clear that entry into the race for Attorney General could not realistically make sense for my family until much later this year. While there are many who have encouraged me to take more time to decide whether or not to enter the race, holding out longer on a final decision will only continue to impede the ability of the other announced Republican candidates to get their campaign operations up to full speed – raising money, recruiting volunteers, etc. For the sake of having a candidate in the strongest position possible going into the Fall 2006 election, it makes sense to announce at this time that I will not be running for Attorney General in the 2006 election.

I am fortunate in that chairing the Assembly Judiciary Committee affords me the opportunity to still significantly impact justice issues in this state. I'm very proud of our work over the past few years on important justice-related initiatives such as the Baby Luke Law (drugged driving), the Identify Theft Task Force and related overhaul of our identity theft laws, Pay-to-Play ban, Video Voyeurism law, prohibition on convicted sex offenders working with children, prohibiting convicted sex offenders from changing their name and concealing their identity, stiffening penalties for sex offenders who fail to register with the sex offender registry, and strengthening our Open Records laws. I look forward to continuing the important (and time consuming) work we are doing this Session on the Budget and important initiatives like Amie's Law, the Identification Security Act and the Avery Task Force.

In addition to family concerns, I am ever cognizant that serving as a Captain in the Army Reserve Judge Advocate General (J.A.G.) Corps exposes me to the very real possibility that I could get called up to serve in the war at some point over the next year. If that happened, it would obviously all but eliminate the possibility of continuing with a statewide campaign.

In one sense, the decision not to run is a very difficult one in that I would very much appreciate the opportunity to serve this state as Attorney General, it can be a very significant position with the right person in that office, and it is such a winnable race at this time. In truth, however, the decision becomes much easier because of the privilege I have to continue serving the citizens of the 84th Assembly District and this state in the Legislature, and, most importantly, because of the great strain on my wife and young children that will be avoided over the next year and a half by my decision not to run.

I am very fortunate to have had the ability to make a difference for the past six years serving my constituents in the Assembly and I hope to have the opportunity to continue that important service.

I wish the announced Republican candidates for Attorney General well as they continue building for the general election. I hope they will begin a dialogue on important initiatives for the Department of Justice which I would have pushed for had I been elected to Attorney General. Those initiatives include:

- 1) Setting up an Identity Theft Hotline – one simple toll free number like 888 ID THEFT - to aid victims of identity theft and assist law enforcement in getting on the trail of identity thieves quickly;
- 2) Create a centralized database easily accessible to law enforcement across the state to allow them to, with the touch of a button, access a ready array of photos over the computer for eyewitness identification purposes. This would be particularly helpful to law enforcement in smaller and more rural jurisdictions;
- 3) Provide training on and encourage greater usage of electronic recording in custodial interrogations – the technology is here, the time has come, we need to utilize that technology and make this happen;
- 4) Better utilize the resources of the State Crime Lab (and work with legislators to procure more resources) to fully utilize DNA technology and eliminate the backlog at the lab for DNA testing for sexual assault prosecutions;
- 5) Aggressively pursue Election Fraud violations;
- 6) Significantly increase resources devoted to stopping the spread of methamphetamines in Wisconsin, and be open to aggressive and innovative strategies to eradicate the usage of this unbelievably dangerous drug;
- 7) Vigorously defend Wisconsin's marriage laws to protect one man-one woman marriage;
- 8) Make the prosecution and incarceration of dangerous sexual predators the No. 1 priority for the Attorney General's office.

I would be happy to work with anyone, Republican or Democrat, on making these items a priority for this state.

Thank you to all the kind supporters who have encouraged me to run for this important position and have been so patient with the time I have taken to make this decision.