**Wisconsin Eye Interview**

**September 3, 2024**

1. **What is your campaign's key message:**

I advocate applying commonsense, historically proven, conservative solutions for today’s problems. I would argue that time tested conservative solutions have served our country and society well for nearly 250 years. Today we have many instances where those practices have been replaced by extreme far left liberal theories that have taken us backwards in meritocracy and social interaction.

I have many constituents come up to me and ask *“when did we have a public discussion of these far-left policies. I feel as if we’ve been taken over by a very small minority and I’m just plain mad at the way government, from the local school district to the Govern’s office is treating us”.*

In today’s world we have to fight to secure a long-term sustainable society for the generations that follow us. There are many forces that have abandoned the future for what they can gain here in the present. That has never worked for long in any other culture over many centuries and it won’t work in Wisconsin and America either. We need a government that will stand strong for our values, morals, charity and purpose.

1. **A bill you would want to Introduce:**

I would focus on reducing the tax burden to taxpayers. When we look at the middle 22 states in the country and remove Minnesota from that mix, we find that Wisconsin’s top tax rate is the highest in that group and our second tax rate, that targets our middle class, is the fourth highest among the 21 states. We need to reduce this burden for Wisconsin taxpayers.

This would include reducing the tax burden on retirees who are leaving Wisconsin for more tax friendly states. We have competition for retired Wisconsinites residency from states with higher temperatures and lower taxes. We are losing too many people that we need to help support our economy right here in Wisconsin. We can’t change winter but we can change our tax code

1. **State budget surplus / Tax cut vs. Spending**

First of all, the State is in very good fiscal condition thanks to increased tax revenue and controlling expenses. On a global scale, the U.S. has placed the nation on a debt spiral, increasing the national debt by $1 trillion every 100 days. The cost of interest on the Federal debt is now the second highest expenditure in the Federal expense line. This is unsustainable and places the country in a vulnerable state on the global stage.

At some point, this will affect Wisconsinites. The Feds will either have to cut services, increase taxes or both. If we do not correct this course, the Feds will continue to print more dollars out of thin air, which results in continued inflation. In turn Americans will be paying more for goods and services. This is causing increased pain on the lower- and middle-income classes.

This translates to a need to control state spending and keep Wisconsin in sound financial condition. Whenever we find that there is a budget surplus, I see this as no different than overpaying for an item and receiving change from the surplus I paid to the seller. Surpluses should be returned to the ones (the taxpayers) who overpaid for their services in the form of a tax reduction or tax rebate.

1. **Campaign priority on K-12**

Covid had a large negative impact on learning process in the K-12 system. K-12 schools have spent the last two years trying to get kids up to grade.

The scholastic performance is still sub-par for many districts. The #1 emphasis in our schools should focus on excellence in scholastics. Our goal is to prepare students for entering adulthood and the responsibilities that come with that role. My constituents tell me that every district should be measured by this ruler and not by things such as DEI or gender studies. That is not why parents send their kids to school.

In recent years, there has been an excessive amount of focus on race and gender. The fact is that most districts have children of all races are competing in sports, the arts, music and scholastics in a positive manner. This starts in daycare centers and church nurseries. I believe we have gone backwards as a society on the race issue by on over-emphasis on what divides us.

1. **Future of Wisconsin's higher Ed system, 4 and 2-year colleges and tech schools**

Higher education is facing a crisis on different fronts. The bright light is that Tech Schools are attracting more students to the trades.

I have seen forecasts that hundreds of 2- and 4-year colleges face closings in the next decade. The reasons given are similar to what Wisconsin colleges are facing:

* Declining attendance
* Declining population trends that we can identify as early as kindergarten
* Families are discouraged by the high cost of a 4-year degree
* A decline in the scholastic output
* Delayed maintenance on many campuses that is resulting large capital and operating deficits

I believe we need to take stock of what challenges are facing us today within our system. We have a Task Force looking at this over the summer and fall. If what we are doing is not working, then it’s time to adapt to a new paradigm. That is the crossroads where our colleges and universities stand today.

This should result in right-sizing the Universities systems. If you can’t afford to do all things without losing money, then choose the courses where the school can be most effective and cost-justified at the same time. The taxpayers are already paying a huge portion of the Universities of Wisconsin. We cannot keep asking the taxpayer to pick up more funding in the shortfall in funding.

1. **Workforce Development Challenges (Big Picture)**
   1. **Workforce Development – Would you support State and Local worker hiring requirement**

If the question is, should we implement state and local hiring requirements. I would oppose this initiative. I do not see this as the role of government. Government should get out of mandating winners and losers. What I want is a level playing field where the most qualified and best prepared applicants are hired. It is my observations that forcing government mandates into the workplace results in dismissing meritocracy and replacing it with artificial quotas. The better goal should be to equip anyone seeking a job with the tools to be their best and all sides are winners

* 1. **Workforce Development - costs and considerations on employee misclassification issues**

In my role in banking, I came across this issue. Misclassification is unfair. Employers are required by law to correctly classify each worker as either an ‘employee’ or an ‘independent contractor. Employers who misclassify workers as independent contractors gain an unfair competitive advantage over other employers.

1. **Affordable housing and rent controls**

Wisconsin has a serious housing crisis that is not easily fixed. Why?

* The cost of new construction as a result of historically high inflation is making home ownership unaffordable for too many people.
* Because many families were able to lock in low-interest mortgage rates in history, these families are not moving up or even out. This blocks lower cost and first-time home-buyer properties from coming to the market and this leaves available homes for sale at strikingly low levels.
* Because first time home buyers are faced with few choices and prices above their ability to pay, they are caught in a rent cycle they cannot escape. And this is made worse in many areas because adding 15+/- million illegal aliens has only made the problem bigger.
* Price controls DO NOT work. If the government interferes with pricing, this does not simply solve an issue. It just transfers the issue to a different venue. When socialist mandates interfere using artificial price controls, business owners will vacate this space invest their money and risk to a different opportunity. The problem is exacerbated.

A real solution will take time and no amount of government policies will change that. We need to focus our attention on increasing supply with affordable housing projects. This could be remodels, conversions of other types of prices and effective input of government funding such as we passed in the current legislative session. This is a changing landscape.

1. **Health care - Medical Systems / Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement to hospitals (preventing closures like in Western WI)**

Healthcare is a complicated issue. The expansion of expensive technology, an aging population, regulatory rules and the battle between medical providers and insurance companies are making it increasingly more difficult for rural medical care providers to provide services today.

On a different front, those medical providers and insurance companies located in more upscale populated areas are building excessively high-cost features in buildings that add nothing to the quality and availability of healthcare services.

Medicare/Medicaid: This subject is a high-level concern. With an aging population the costs and funding continue to rise at levels that are hard to comprehend. Nationally, Medicare and Medicaid are the highest cost budget item at $1.8 trillion annually. In addition to that, the Unfunded Liabilities for Medicare and Medicaid is approaching $42 trillion.

While we find ways to meet our current funding crisis, we better be thinking of what changes that will be needed to make it possible to meet our future obligations. I am prepared to work on these issues but understand there are no easy long-term solutions.

1. **Environment and water quality**

These are serious issues facing all Americans. From PFA’s to various kinds of toxic chemicals, that are resulting is a terrible impact on American’s health, we need to continue to pursue solutions that address our immediate needs and find cost-justified ways to insure the future of our society. We need a pathway that achieves our goals without breaking our economy. This took a long time to get where we are and will take an extended period of time to get control of the problem