The Wisconsin State Assembly Republicans held a press conference last Wednesday to announce their “Forward Agenda”. Consisting of almost 100 goals, the agenda builds off of previous legislation focusing on the caucus’s philosophy of “less government is good government”.

In a statement released Wednesday, Rep. Vos made the following comments regarding the announcement: “Assembly Republicans are leading the way by addressing the problems facing our state with a focus on long-term solutions. We want the best education system for our students, a thriving economy for workers and businesses, and safe neighborhoods for Wisconsin families.”

The agenda is broken down into three main categories, Job Growth and Government Relations, Education and Workforce Development, and Health and Public Safety. Focusing on controversial issues first, the caucus aims to reduce the tax burden by closing loop holes, reducing inefficiencies, and heading towards a flatter and lower
tax code through the creation of a tax code task force. In addition, Republican will tackle the ever growing transportation debt, reviewing all options including:

- Reducing inefficiencies in the State Highway Program
- New revenue opportunities in the Department of Transportation
- User fees to recoup costs with infrastructure wear and tear
- Providing local government with more limit and restraint options
- Tolling for road usage

The Assembly Republicans also addressed another controversial issue, education. Through their learning initiative proposal, the caucus wants to ensure every high school freshman is provided a computer or tablet as well as increasing broadband access to rural areas. The caucus will also continue to invest in technical colleges in order to help build Wisconsin’s future workforce.

The agenda touched on health care and safety promoting the continuation of the H.O.P.E agenda as well as ideas for reversing the impending healthcare workforce shortage. The caucus will also target carjackings, human trafficking, drunk driving, and low recidivism rates in the coming session.

Though many spoke in favor of the proposal during the press conference others had concerns with the goals laid out for next session. Minority Leader Peter Barca commented on the proposal, stating, "If history is any guide, the Republicans will announce their legislative agenda where they say they support issues that are important to the people of this state, and yet, they will not follow through on real solutions...Not only do they not follow through, but they don’t discuss their actual big ticket agenda items that get first priority. For example, they never mentioned that they were going to pass right-to-work or repeal prevailing wage, which only hurts Wisconsin workers."

Governor Walker has yet to comment on the “Forward Agenda” as he continues his trip around Wisconsin announcing a school supplies sales tax holiday as well as a new expansion to statewide broadband. The Assembly will reconvene in January 2017 following the November 8th general election.

Read the story on the Hoven Consulting website.
Gov. Walker Announces New Contract to Expand Broadband

Last Tuesday, Governor Walker traveled to Southern Door County High School to announce the state’s new contract with AT&T and its partners to increase broadband speeds on the BadgerNet Converged Network (BCN). The move is set to save tax payers nearly $8 million annually.

“Faster, more reliable access to the internet is crucial as our state continues to move into the 21st century,” Governor Walker stated in his press release on Tuesday. “The new broadband contract we’re announcing today dramatically improves the quality of service to users. Schools and local governments throughout Wisconsin will have the ability to utilize this contract and potentially save money. Ultimately, this enhances the quality of education for our students, as well as the quality of local government services for our taxpayers.”

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This Week in Madison

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Wednesday at 10:00am: Legislative Council Study Committee on Access to Civil Legal Services

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