



Aging Advocacy Day 2025

Virtual Information Session

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

Mission Statement:

*The Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) is a collaboration of organizations and individuals **working with and for Wisconsin's older adults to shape public policy and improve the quality of life for older people.** WAAN advocates for all older adults by educating the community and policy makers on issues impacting older adults; mobilizing people on priority issues; and advocating for change.*



Core Members

- Aging and Disability Professionals Association of Wisconsin (ADPAW)
- Alzheimer's Association Wisconsin Chapter
- Board on Aging and Long Term Care (BOALTC)
- Wisconsin Adult Day Services Association (WADSA)
- Wisconsin Family and Caregiver Support Alliance (WFACSA)
- Wisconsin Association of Area Agencies on Aging (W4A)
- Wisconsin Association of Benefit Specialists (WABS)
- Wisconsin Association of Nutrition Directors (WAND)
- Wisconsin Association of Senior Centers (WASC)
- Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA)
- Wisconsin Senior Advocates
- Wisconsin Senior Corps Association (WISCA)
- Wisconsin Tribal Aging Unit Association

Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Day, May 13, 2025

Thank You, Sponsors



AARP Wisconsin

Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR) • Milwaukee County Aging Services
Wauwatosa Senior Commission • Wisconsin Association of Benefit Specialists (WABS)

Aging and Disability Professionals Association of Wisconsin (ADPAW) • Area Agency on Aging of Dane County • TMG
UAW Milwaukee Metropolitan Retiree Council • Wisconsin Association of Nutrition Directors (WAND)
Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) • WisPACT • Wisconsin Senior Corps Association (WISCA)

Acumen Fiscal Agent • Alzheimer's Association SE Wisconsin Chapter • Village Caregiving • Wisconsin Association of Senior Centers (WASC)
Wisconsin Family and Caregiver Support Alliance (WFACSA) • Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA) • Wisconsin Senior Advocates

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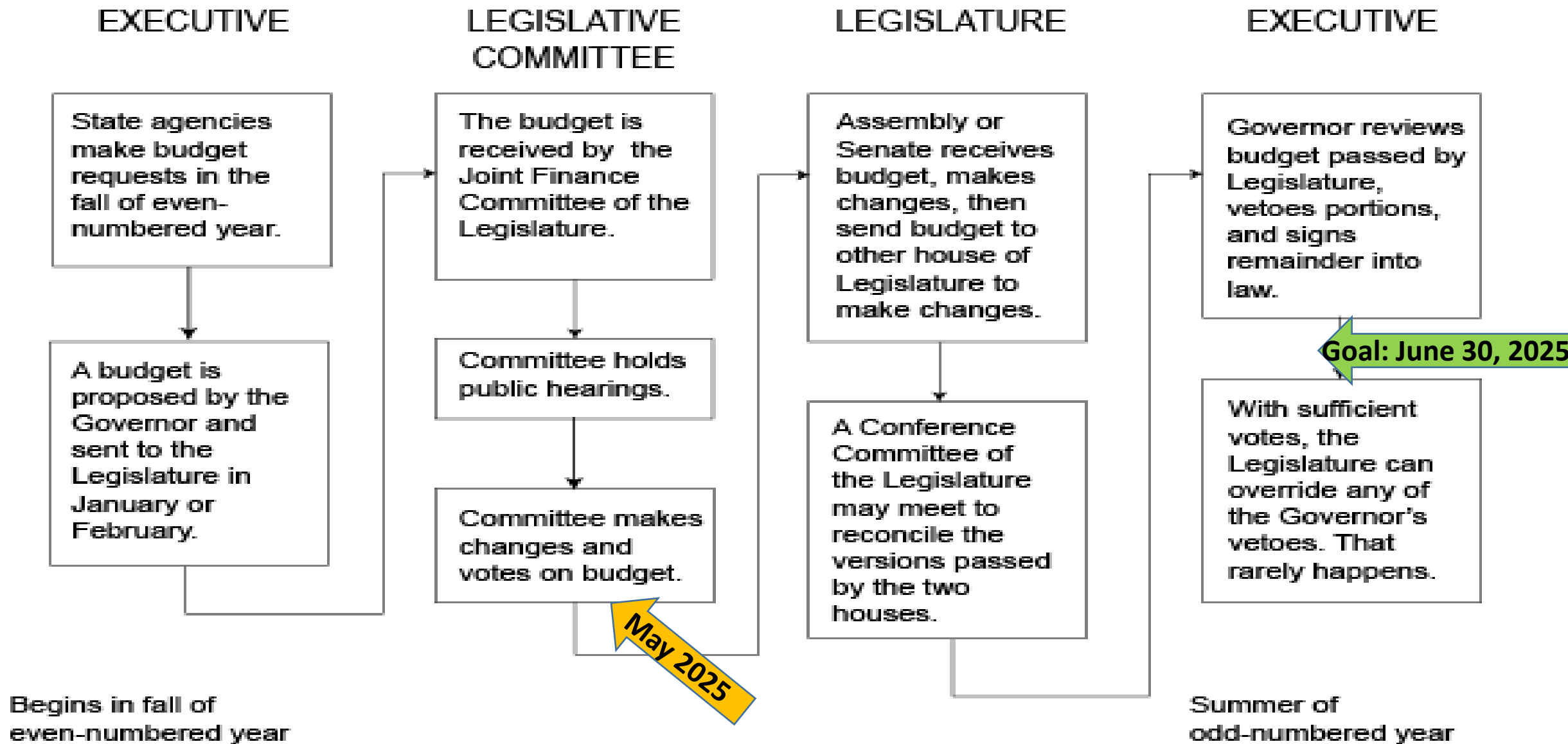
Profile of State Government

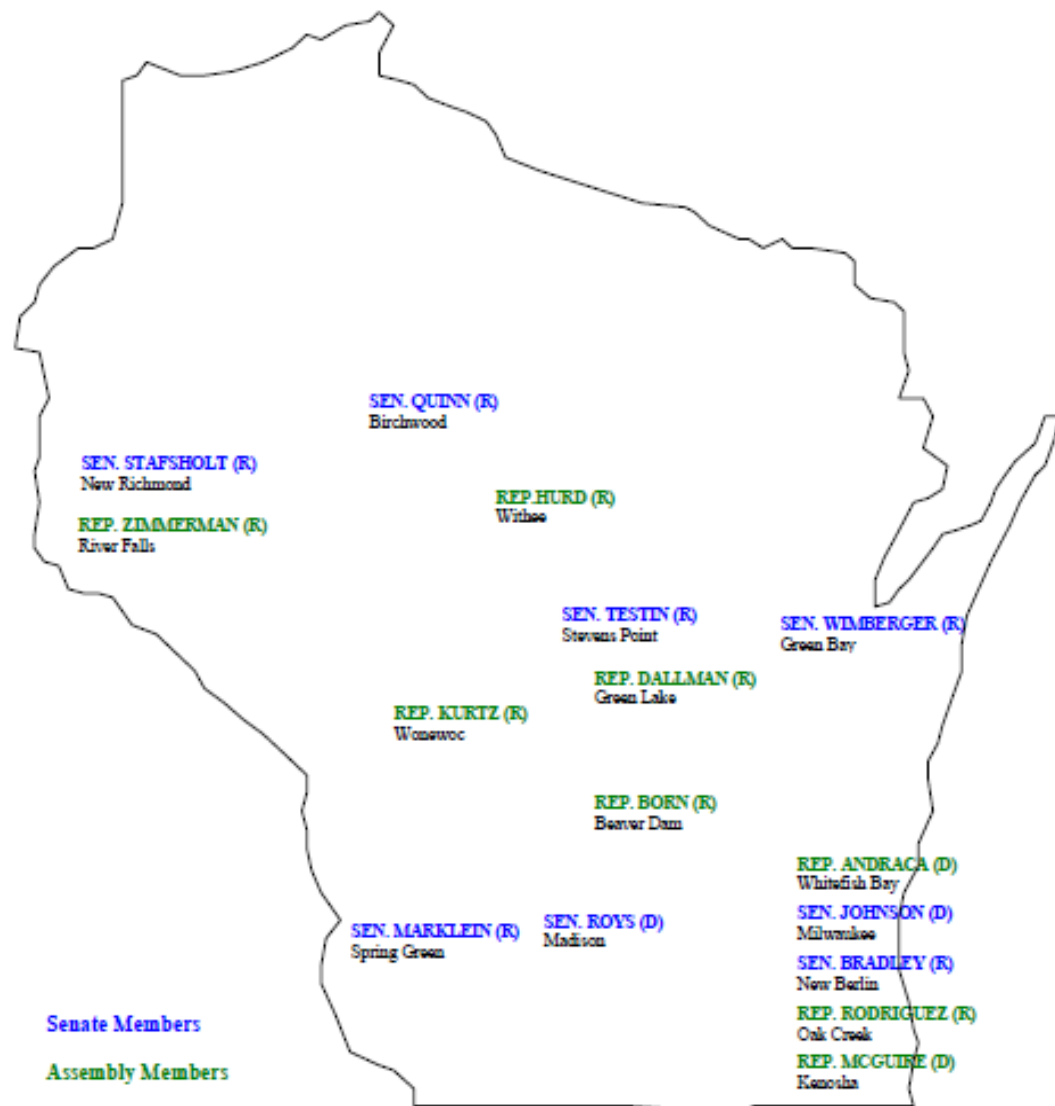
Wisconsin

- Divided state government
- Governor Tony Evers (D)
- State Senate/State Assembly (Republican Majority)
- New legislative maps + election + retirements/resignations = nearly 3 dozen new legislators



The Budget Process in Wisconsin





Wisconsin State Legislature – Joint Committee on Finance 2025-26

#1. Invest in Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)

WAAN's Position: Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) - Increase funding to ADRCs by \$19.9 million in the 2025-27 biennial state budget to address funding inequities between ADRCs and increasing service needs resulting from a growing aging population.



Wisconsin's statewide network of ADRCs provides information about critical, cost-saving services and programs related to aging or living with a disability. A robust and well-funded ADRC network will help Wisconsin residents navigate their unique challenges with confidence and dignity. Increased funding will enable every ADRC to offer reliable and comprehensive support, allowing individuals to age in place, delay entry into long-term care and improve their overall quality of life.

ADRCs serve the fastest growing demographic of our state's population. Nearly one-quarter of Wisconsin's population is aged 60 or older. ADRCs have over 500,000 contacts each year with individuals, families, and professionals seeking guidance and support. **By reducing hospital readmissions and emergency department visits, ADRCs save individuals, families and taxpayers \$3.88 for every \$1 invested in Wisconsin's ADRCs.**



#2. In-Home Direct Care Workforce Support



WAAN's Position: To support the training, recruitment and retention of direct care professionals (DCP) – a) Increase the Medicaid Personal Care rate, b) Create and fund a state certification process for in-home caregiver training, c) Support higher Medicaid rates for home and community-based services (HCBS), and d) Create an earned income disregard program for DCPs applying for public benefits.

Direct care professionals (DCPs) provide essential assistance – dressing, bathing, eating, meal preparation, housekeeping, basic medical tasks - to older people and people living with disabilities. Low wages, limited benefits, low insurance reimbursement rates, and the high-cost childcare, transportation, and housing are making it difficult for agencies to recruit and retain DCPs. Unfilled positions are causing agencies to turn away customers in need of service.

The direct care workforce shortage results in a lack of essential services, increased pressure on family caregivers, challenges for long-term care providers, and **puts many older people and people with disabilities at risk of hospitalization and more expensive residential care.**

#3. Safeguard Meals on Wheels for Wisconsin Seniors



WAAN's Position: Safeguard Meals on Wheels/Home-Delivered Meals – To meet the need across Wisconsin, an increase of \$12.6/million in each year of the budget is needed. Home-delivered meals (HDMs), often referred to as Meals on Wheels (MOWs), are an economical and proven way to support Wisconsinites as we age.

Home-delivered meals (HDMs) are more than food, they are vital services that sustain lives and independence by providing nutritious foods, safety checks, socialization, and connections to services. HDMs address isolation, hunger, and malnutrition among older people. A 2023 survey revealed for nearly 70% of the 34,000 people served, this meal was their main source of food and nutrition each day.

Wisconsin's home-delivered meal programs are challenged by unprecedented levels of need, increased expenses driven by inflation and a lack of resources, federal funding cuts, and the expiration of COVID funding and flexibilities. **One year of HDM and the services that accompany the meals roughly equate to the same cost of one day in the hospital or 10 days in a nursing home.** This funding increase would enable Wisconsin's Older Americans Act (OAA) HDM programs to meet the need in their communities and avoid or eliminate the need to establish waiting lists for the program, restrict or limit services in part of their service area, or have areas without service at all.

#4. Reducing Falls Among Older Adults in Wisconsin

WAAN's Position: To reduce the high rate of deadly fall among older adults, we request a \$450,000 annual state budget appropriation to support the Falls Free Wisconsin Center.

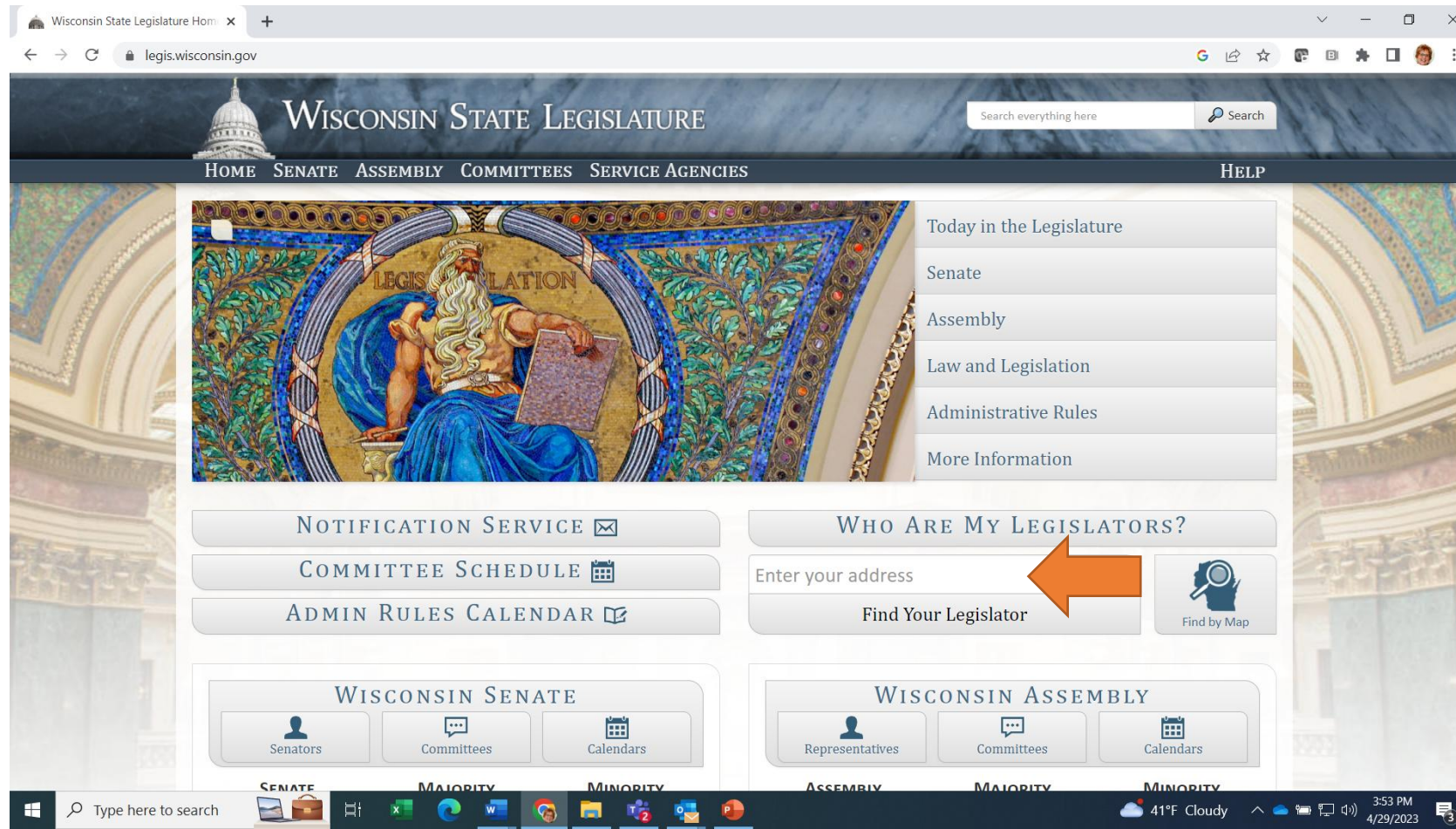


Wisconsin has the nation's highest rate of deadly falls among older adults. From 2021-2023, there were 5,287 deaths due to falls among Wisconsin's 65+ population. Falls are the number one cause of injuries in older adults and are a key driver of emergency department (ED) visits, hospitalizations, and nursing home admissions. An estimated \$1 billion is spent annually on falls-related health costs in Wisconsin which includes Medicare, Medicaid, and out-of-pocket expenses. In 2022, emergency medical services (EMS) in Wisconsin responded to over 130,000 falls. Falls related calls have major implications for EMS availability, as it can decrease their availability to respond to more urgent needs and have financial consequences on communities.

Support for the Falls Free Wisconsin Center, a falls prevention center of excellence, would help to raise awareness of the incidence and cost of older adult falls; **help older adults, their families and caregivers identify and reduce falls risk; reduce the burden of falls and provide resources to emergency services and health systems**, and deliver evidence-based prevention education and interventions across the state.

Find out who represents you

- Contact the Legislative Hotline: 800-362-9472
- Go to the state legislature's website: <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/>



Research your legislators in advance at:

<https://legis.wisconsin.gov/>

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL `docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/legislators/senate/2821`. The page is titled "WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE" and features a navigation bar with links: HOME, SENATE, ASSEMBLY, COMMITTEES, SERVICE AGENCIES, DOCS, OPTIONS, and HELP. A search bar is located in the top right corner.

The main content area displays the profile of Senator Howard L. Marklein, Senate District 17 (R - Spring Green). It includes a portrait photo and a list of links: Home Page, District map based on 2023 Wisconsin Act 94, Subscribe to updates via Notify, 2025 authored proposals feed, 2025 all related items feed, 2025 author index, and Historical information.

Below the links, contact information is provided:

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Madison Office: | Telephone: | Fax: |
| Room 316 East | (608) 266-0703 | (608) 282-3557 |
| State Capitol | | |
| PO Box 7882 | | |

To the right of the profile, there is a section titled "2025 Authored Proposals" with a sub-header "(first or second author, first sponsor)". It lists four bills:

- 4/25/2025: **2025 Senate Bill 220**
Relating to: residency requirements for persons circulating nomination papers or recall petitions.
- 4/25/2025: **2025 Senate Bill 221**
Relating to: all-terrain vehicles and utility terrain vehicles with out-of-state registrations.
- 4/25/2025: **2025 Senate Bill 226**
Relating to: determination of where a defendant resides or does substantial business for purposes of venue.
- 4/23/2025: **2025 Assembly Bill 221**
Relating to: all-terrain vehicles and utility terrain vehicles with out-of-state registrations.
- 4/16/2025: **2025 Senate Bill 203**
Relating to: regulation of pharmacy benefit managers, fiduciary and disclosure requirements on pharmacy benefit managers, and application of prescription drug payments to health insurance cost-

The bottom of the browser window shows a Windows taskbar with the date and time: 10:28 AM 5/7/2025.

Getting Started

- Agenda:
 - Check-in begins - 9 a.m.
 - Advocate training – 10 a.m.
 - Planning meeting with Senate district constituents – 11 a.m.
 - Lunch & Planning meeting with Assembly district constituents – 11:30 a.m.
 - Walk to the State Capitol – 12:15 p.m.
 - Group photo at the State Capitol – MLK entrance stairs – 12:30 p.m.
 - Senate visits – 1:00 p.m.
 - Assembly visits – 2:00 p.m.
 - Check-out and Debriefing (State Capitol, North Hearing Rm.) – open 12:45 – 3 p.m.
- Advocate booklet & Evaluation
- Legislative folders & Legislative Feedback Sheets



Follow-up:

- Send a thank you note or email
- Attend an in-district meeting with your legislators
- Attend one of your legislator's listening sessions or coffee with constituents
- Invite your legislator to an upcoming agency/organization event to see programs in action
- Invite your legislator to join you at a local dining site or for a bus ride
- Sign-up to receive advocacy alerts from the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network – and respond to them
- Vote and encourage others to vote
- Join a board or advisory council
- Speak out on local issues



Talking with your legislator

Building a “Sandwich”

1. Greeting and introduction (bread)
2. Why you are here – top concern(s) (condiments)
3. Why this issue is important to you (meat/protein) – share your story
4. Ask for what you want/need your elected official to do (more condiments)
5. Closing and thank you (other slice of bread)



Aging Advocacy Day 2018



**This is what aging advocates
look like!!!**

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH



FLIP THE SCRIPT ON AGING: MAY 2025



DEMOCRACY
IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT,
IT'S A PARTICIPATORY EVENT.
IF WE DON'T
PARTICIPATE IN IT,
IT CEASES TO BE
A DEMOCRACY.
-MICHAEL MOORE

“No voice is too soft when that voice speaks for others.”-
Janna Cachola

Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network

**You are equipped and ready
to step forward and ask for
what is needed to support
the older adults and
caregivers of Wisconsin!**

Questions?

Janet Zander

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Elder Law & Advocacy Center

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Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc.

www.gwaar.org

