



Good Morning/ afternoon,

My name is Dave Blank and I am executive director of the Racine County Convnetion and Visitors Bureau. I am here today to support two parts of the governor's budget relating to tourism.

First, I support the SB 13, the school start bill which would require that all public schools in the state begin after September 1, yet allow the individual school districts the ability to set the date based on input from public hearings. As written, it would also allow athletic teams to begin practice and staff to have workdays prior to that date

Presently the state's 3rd largest industry- tourism- is cut off both from an employment standpoint and a visitor standpoint in mid august, leaving the last two weeks of August with it great weather as an economic wasteland. This bill would allow the students to continue to work at their summer jobs through the end of August and would give the state's tourism destinations and related businesses an additional two weeks of peak time revenue, thus having a huge impact on the sales tax revenue. It is a win-win for students, families, employers, your constituents and the state of Wisconsin.

Within Racine County's \$150 million travel industry, the impact would be enormous. The summer season, as defined from May thru August accounts for 44% of our yearly tourism expenditures. This is the peak time of the year when hotels, attractions, restaurants, shops and other visitor services are running full. SB 13 would give us another two full weeks to reap the economic benefits to our local area that tourism brings.

Secondly, I am also in favor of the additional \$4 million in proceeds from the tribes that is earmarked for the Department of Tourism. As you well have heard, Wisconsin lags behind our neighboring states in tourism expenditures and while Moose Speros and the staff do a great job in promoting the state as a tourism destination, slowly but surely the deficit does catch up to you affecting the number of visitors, the amount of time they spend in the state and ultimately the amount of money that they spend. I'm getting tired of seeing the South Dakota ads on Milwaukee tv during the news. Wouldn't you like to be able to say that about the number of ads promoting our great state in the Chicago area?

Thank you for your kind consideration to these important matters.

You'll like our lakeside manner