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PROFILE OF THE 2015 WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

January 5, 2015

This brief profiles the members of the 2015 Wisconsin Legislature at the time of their inauguration on January 5, 2015. It includes information about party affiliation, marital status, legislative experience, occupation, gender, age, educational background, and military service.

A summary table that offers comparable data for the last six legislatures is included. Similar information, dating back to the 1943 Legislature, has appeared in the *Wisconsin Blue Book* since 1956. Comprehensive historical tables of this data appear in the *2007 Wisconsin Blue Book* at page 116 for the senate and page 188 for the assembly.

Note: Although Senator Glenn Grothman was elected to Congress and has submitted his resignation from the senate effective January 3, he has been included in the senate for this statistical analysis.

THE SENATE PROFILE

The senate has 33 members, including 19 Republicans and 14 Democrats. Of the total, 11 senators are women and two are African-American (both women). Twenty-three senators are married.

Legislative Experience. Of the 17 seats up for election in 2014, 10 members from the 2013 Senate were reelected and seven new members were elected from open seats. Six of the seven new senators have previous legislative experience. Sixteen members are holdover senators in the middle of their terms.

A total of 24 senators have previous service in the assembly. In terms of prior service in the senate alone, 4 senators have served in 10 or more biennial sessions; 11 served in 5-9 sessions; and the remaining 18 have served in fewer than 5 sessions. Most notable is Senator Fred

Risser (D-26th District), currently the longest-serving legislator in the United States. Risser also has the distinction of the longest legislative tenure in Wisconsin state history, with 26 prior sessions in the senate and three in the assembly for a total of 58 years of service.

Three senators had previous experience in a legislative staff position. Two worked for either a state senator or representative. One worked as staff for a congressman and state legislator.

Local Government Experience. Seventeen senators have had experience in local government as elected public officials. Nine served as county board supervisors and, of these, one was also an alderman. Four additional senators served on city councils, one was on school board, and three were on a town board.

Age. As of January 5, 2015, the average age of a senator was 57, making this the oldest senate since at least 1943; it is fractionally older than the previous senate. The 2015 Senate has an age range from 34 to 87 years. The age ranges for the senators were: three senators under 40, five in the 40-49 range, 10 in the 50-59 range, and 15 senators 60 years of age or older.

Occupation. Eleven senators list themselves as full-time legislators. Two senators are currently practicing attorneys. Other current occupations include newspaper publishing, accountant, small business owner, and nursing.

Education. Thirty-two senators continued their formal education beyond high school. Twenty-seven have academic degrees and five attended either a technical school or a college or university. One has an associates degree. Three senators hold law degrees, six have master's degrees. One has a Ph.D; and 18 others hold bachelor's degrees.

Military Service. Seven senators have served in the nation's armed forces: one in the Navy, and three each in the U.S. Army Reserve and the Wisconsin Air National Guard. One senator is a veteran of World War II, one is a Persian Gulf War veteran, and one an Iraq War veteran.

THE ASSEMBLY PROFILE

There are 99 representatives to the assembly, including 63 Republicans and 36 Democrats. Twenty-two members are women, two fewer than in the 2013 session. Four representatives are African-American (including one woman), and two are Hispanic. Seventy-five representatives are married.

Legislative Experience. Seventy-four representatives were reelected in 2014, while 25 are serving their first term in the assembly. Three of the 2014 incumbents were defeated in the general election out of 77 seeking reelection. The longest-serving representative is Representative Al Ott (R-3rd District), who has served in the assembly since 1987. Only one other representative has served 10 or more consecutive sessions. Other returning representatives include 12 with 5-9 sessions, 8 with 4 sessions, 6 with 3 sessions, 19 with 2 sessions, and 27 with one session. A majority of members are in their first or second terms. It is only the third time this has occurred since 1973. In terms of prior sessions served, this assembly has less experience (an average of roughly 2.2 sessions) than any since 1965.

Thirteen representatives have had previous experience in a legislative staff position. Four worked for a member of the U.S. Congress, six worked in the state legislature, and three worked for a member of Congress and a legislator.

Local Government Experience. Of the 48 representatives who have had experience in local elected office, four held office at both the county and municipal level, 17 others held county office, and an additional 27 had municipal service.

Nineteen representatives have served as county board supervisors, 15 as city council members, six as town board members, and five

others were village trustees. Four have served as school board members. One has served as a city mayor and one as a village president. One is a former county clerk and one is a former circuit court judge.

Age. As of January 5, 2015, the average age of a representative was 48, with an age range from 24 to 76 years. The age ranges for the representatives were: nine in the 20-29 range, 15 in the 30-39 range, 29 in the 40-49 range, 26 in the 50-59 range, 17 in the 60-69 range, and three 70 or older.

Occupation. Thirty-four representatives list themselves as full-time legislators. Five representatives are currently farmers, and seven are currently practicing attorneys. Among the other representatives, 24 list themselves as business owners or self-employed. Other current occupations include realtor, labor arbitrator, veterinarian, accountant, librarian, and pilot. Former occupations listed include four teachers and three law enforcement or corrections officers.

Education. Of the 95 representatives who have continued their formal education beyond high school, 67 hold academic degrees and 26 attended a college, university, or agricultural, business, technical, or trade school after high school graduation. Listed by their highest degree, two have a D.V.M., and 12 hold law degrees. Thirteen hold master's degrees, 41 have bachelor's degrees, and two hold an associate degree.

Military Service. Ten representatives have served in the armed forces. Three served in the Army, two in the Air Force, and two in the Navy. Three were members of the Air National Guard or the U.S. Army Reserve. The two Navy veterans later served in the U.S. Naval Reserve. One Army veteran later served in the Army Reserve and one in the National Guard. Two representatives each served in the Vietnam, Persian Gulf, and Iraq Wars.

**PERSONAL DATA ON WISCONSIN LEGISLATORS
2005 – 2015 Sessions**

	2005		2007		2009		2011		2013		2015	
	Sen.	Rep.	Sen.	Rep.	Sen.	Rep.*	Sen.	Rep.*	Sen.	Rep.	Sen.	Rep.
Party affiliation												
Democrat	14	39	18	47	18	52	14	38	15	39	14	36
Republican	19	60	15	52	15	46	19	60	18	60	19	63
Number with previous legislative service												
In senate	28	0	29	0	31	0	26	0	30	0	27	0
In assembly	23	81	23	82	23	86	23	69	25	74	24	74
Highest number of prior sessions in same house	21	17	22	18	23	19	24	14	25	13	26	14
Occupations												
Full-time legislator	11	39	12	38	11	39	11	32	12	35	11	34
Attorney	2	11	3	11	3	12	3	8	3	7	2	7
Farmer	3	9	3	5	3	5	2	6	2	4	1	6
Other	17	40	15	45	16	43	16	53	16	53	19	52
Education												
High school only	4	9	2	7	1	7	0	4	1	5	1	4
Beyond high school	29	90	31	92	32	92	33	95	32	94	32	95
Bachelor's or associate degree	26	70	28	69	29	69	29	73	28	72	28	69
Advanced degree	8	34	10	37	11	35	10	27	9	27	9	24
Number with experience on local governing body												
County board	4	18	4	17	4	15	6	16	7	18	9	19
Municipal board	10	28	12	25	12	30	9	29	11	30	9	29
Age												
Oldest	77	77	79	79	81	80	83	72	85	72	87	76
Youngest	34	28	36	28	38	29	30	25	32	25	34	24
Average	52	50	54	50	55	50	56	49	57	49	57	48
Veterans	4	13	2	16	2	16	2	13	2	10	3	7
Marital status												
Single	10	25	8	25	9	24	7	18	9	22	10	23
Married	23	70	25	69	24	71	26	79	24	76	23	75
Widowed	0	4	0	5	0	4	0	2	0	1	0	1
Number of women	8	26	8	22	7	22	8	23	9	24	11	22

*Includes one Independent.

Sen. – Senators; Rep. – Representatives.

Note: Most data are recorded as of the date on which the legislature first convened; ages are determined as of January 1.