



TO: Wisconsin Editors

FROM: James A. Buchen, Vice President, Government Relations

RE: Former UW Chancellor Wiley column

DATE: August 20, 2008

Former University of Wisconsin Chancellor John Wiley's column in the September issue of *Madison Magazine* contains a number of factual errors regarding Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce that need to be corrected.

A thorough "sifting and winnowing" in search of the truth that is part of the UW tradition would show that in the last budget, WMC supported the University of Wisconsin's budget as supported by Governor Jim Doyle and passed by both houses of the Legislature. WMC actively lobbied for final passage of the UW budget.

The WMC legislative agenda calls upon the legislature and the Governor to "Establish appropriate priorities for spending limited government resources that recognize the significant economic development benefits of the University of Wisconsin ..."

However, Wiley's commentary contains factual misstatements that need immediate correction.

#### **Wiley's Commentary and WMC Rebuttal**

**Wiley** -- *"Apparently, the organization's definition of being competitive is being among those states with the lowest taxes, lowest wages and least regulations."*

**WMC** – WMC has a broad public policy agenda established by the WMC board and full membership. WMC's policy agenda calls for establishing pro-growth policies that will allow businesses to flourish, and even calls for protecting funding for the University of Wisconsin system as a means to foster a strong economy.

**Wiley** – *"Wisconsin currently has the 11<sup>th</sup> highest per capita state revenues in the nation and WMC cites the statistic as evidence that Wisconsin is a 'tax hell.'"*

**WMC** – Actually, the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance reported that Wisconsin has the 11<sup>th</sup> highest state and local tax burden in the nation as a percentage of personal income, and WMC issued a press release hailing that development as tremendous progress in lowering the state's traditionally high tax burden.

**Wiley** – *“WMC routinely opposes most measures favored by labor unions, and most measures aimed at improving the lot of entry-level workers and low-income workers.”*

**WMC** – WMC routinely works with organized labor to develop reforms to the workers’ compensation program and unemployment insurance programs. Additionally, WMC supported the last two state increases in the minimum wage and supports raising the state minimum wage to be consistent with the federal minimum wage.

**Wiley** – “Where in WMC’s political agenda is there any acknowledgement of the singular importance of creating more high income jobs. . . .?”

**WMC** – See page 4 of the WMC legislative public policy agenda.

*“The creation of meaningful, well-paying jobs provides economic security and dignity to Wisconsin citizens. A strong economy provides the tax base necessary to support government’s role in educating, building infrastructure, protecting the environment, and caring for the needy. Economic growth and job creation combat social problems such as unemployment, poverty and crime.”*

**Wiley** – “Their unconscionably scurrilous personal attacks on Justice Louis Butler.”

**WMC** – WMC Issues Mobilization Council, Inc. aired television ads critical of Justice Butler’s record on the court. WMC did not engage in personal attacks, and that is simply false. All of WMC IMC ads regarding Justice Butler dealt with his term on the court, his rulings and his public statements.

**Wiley** – “WMC has, somehow, allowed itself to be hijacked by highly partisan, ideologically driven staff.”

**WMC** – WMC’s ideology is the ideology of the WMC board of directors and the WMC members. The staff represents the members. Period. The policy agenda was approved unanimously by the WMC board, and the WMC board unanimously has recommended that WMC continue to engage in the political debate in our state.

We appreciate Chancellor Wiley’s comments and we wish him well.

On, Wisconsin!