**A024C035H230103OT\_CANON\_02\_proxy.mp3**

[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** Certainly provides guidance for the powers of each branch of government. It spends significantly more time on the legislative branch. The Constitution addresses the legislature 34 different times. Meanwhile, the governor is mentioned ten times and the Attorney General, Secretary of State and treasurer. One section each. The Wisconsin Constitution states. The legislative power shall be vested in a Senate and an Assembly. We all know the Assembly should have been listed first, but we'll just have to give that to our friends in the State Senate. The Council on the Constitution goes on to say, and I quote, The style of all laws of the state shall be the people of the state of Wisconsin represented in the Senate and Assembly. Do an act as follows No law shall be enacted except by bill. No law shall be enforced until published, unquote. The constitutional authors clearly gave preference to the legislative branch, giving it powers to write the laws, allocate funds and create the means to generate revenue and assign other duties to the other constitutional officers. Today, 99 men and women took the oath of office and became state representatives, some for the first time, some again for the branch closest to the people. Each serves as the voice and advocate of 60,000 constituents in state government. It's our job to listen and to serve the citizens when passing laws and approving our state budget. Once again, the voters told us to work together. So as we start our legislative work, I would like to offer a specific challenge to each and every legislator in this chamber and every elected official in the state capitol. Before the heated rhetoric fires up and rigid ideologies become concrete, let's reset and begin anew. Divided government means a lot more discussion, debate and yes, even arguing. So if you come from the far left or the far right, please always remember in this institution, the middle 90% of the body is where things get done, not on the fringe. If you read any of the nation's founding documents or even the documents from the founding of Wisconsin, you will almost always find that compromise has been and needs to be at the heart of our democracy. We all know that compromise doesn't mean giving up on your principles. Instead of having a press conference to score cheap political points, I invite you to reach out first and ask us to discuss your idea. My door has been and always will be open to every member of the Assembly, regardless of the political party they are members of. Let us not forget why we are here to work together to solve problems and do what's best for Wisconsin, not our political careers. The political campaigns are over. We now need to govern without personal attacks or name calling. We can bring back civility in politics, at least here in Wisconsin. We can lead the nation. Proving that we can disagree without despising our neighbor. We can all strive to lead by example. To show this ideal can become a reality. Let's do better. And we can start in this chamber today. Every sentence. Since I become speaker, we have had more than 90% of the bills passed in bipartisan fashion. Bipartisanship isn't something new to this chamber or to most of us. And this session should be no different. I promise you, over the next two years, we can and will make real, meaningful reforms. There are three legislative priorities I want to focus on today that we hope can reach bipartisan consensus. The first is learning loss. Now that we see that two out of every three children in Wisconsin since 2019 are doing worse in school and aren't proficient in math or reading for their grade level, we must address this. That's embarrassing for Wisconsin. We also know that the massive amount of federal resources spent over the past two years has demonstrated that just dumping a bunch of more money into education will not fix the problem. It's not that simple. We must have real reform and accountability to help deal with this educational crisis. Next are our demographic challenges that we see in Wisconsin. Our state has experienced almost no net population growth and is aging faster than the national average. We need to do more to keep our friends and family in Wisconsin and attract new folks to live here. When I look at our tax climate, I see that all around us are flat taxes in Iowa, Michigan, Illinois, a Republican state, a Democrat state, and a newly turned Democrat state. Having a discussion about our tax burden can help with our demographic challenges. And just to be clear, it's not about rewarding the wealthy, even though there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. It's about saying that if you're a retired couple and they decide where they're going to spend six months in a day, it should be Wisconsin, not Florida or Texas or Arizona or Tennessee, all places that have a significantly lower tax burden than Wisconsin. Now, there's one thing we will all agree on for sure. We can't fix the weather, but we can work together to fix our tax climate, to keep all people wanting to live in Wisconsin and not live somewhere else. The third priority is stimulating innovation for our entire history. Wisconsin has been the invention capital of the United States. Everything from malted milk to garbage disposals were invented right here in Wisconsin. We've been less innovative in government, and we need to change that and do better rather than just doing the way that we've always done things the last 20 or 30 years and adding more money to the top of the pile. I would love for us to use our budget and our opportunity to legislate, to focus on innovating and be a place where new ideas thrive. I invite every legislator to be part of these important innovations, and as always, the majority is open to working with anybody who brings good ideas to the table and a sense of goodwill. And like every session while I've been speaker, I will invite the minority party to sit down with us to draft a memorandum of understanding to serve as a bipartisan guide for the legislative session as we set a path forward for Wisconsin. Today, we celebrate the Badger State, not as a Republican or a Democrat, but as fellow Wisconsinites. You are the new members of the 106th Wisconsin State Assembly, and it's time to get things done during divided government through real leadership. Let's get to work. God bless each of you, our families, and God bless the state of Wisconsin. Thank you. And let's give a big round of applause to Justice Rogan Sack, who did a great job administering the oath today.

[00:07:07] **Unidentified** Thank you very much.

[00:07:15] **Speaker 1** The Assembly will now proceed to the election of the speaker pro tempore. Are there any nominations? The chair recognizes the gentleman from the 39th District, Representative Bourne.

[00:07:26] **Speaker 2** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honor today to rise to nominate Representative Kevin Peterson for the position of Speaker Pro Tempore. Representative Peterson was elected in 2006 to the state assembly. Kevin and his wife have two daughters. He is a small business owner. And from the stories I've heard over the years from him, a proud Navy veteran, as he should be. He has a history here in the legislature of bipartisan legislation and working with people to find compromise. The incumbent members certainly know of the importance of this position and the new members will learn quickly. The speaker pro tem is an important position in our Assembly floor day. They have an incredible responsibility to make sure that we work within our assembly rules and procedures, but also to make sure that it's a fair process where we all have the opportunity, as the Speaker talked about, to represent our 60,000 people back home. It doesn't matter where you come from. It doesn't matter your partizanship. Everybody gets their say. And it's the job of this position to make sure that that's a fair process on our assembly floor. I know from working with Kevin the last ten years that I've been in that he is a student of the rules and the process of this legislature and also the history, and that will serve him well in this new role. But more importantly, I know from every time I've worked with him or had a conversation with him, he is a thoughtful, kind and fair person, and that will serve him and all of us well in this new position. So it is indeed my honor to nominate Representative Kevin Peterson for the Speaker for the position of Speaker Pro Tempore.

[00:09:29] **Speaker 1** The gentleman from the 40th Representative Petersen, has been nominated for the office of Speaker Pro Tempore of the Assembly. Are there any further nominations or any other nominations? Are there any other nominations hearing? None. The nomination of the chair declares nominations closed. The only candidate for speaker pro tempore is Representative Kevin Peterson. The chair recognizes the gentleman from the 32nd Assembly District.

[00:09:50] **Speaker 2** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It feels a little weird to say this, but I ask unanimous.