



Senator Herb Kohl

United States Senator for Wisconsin



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The beginning of a New Year is a good time to reflect on the one coming to a close. 2011 was marked by political confrontation and Americans all across the country are frustrated. My hope for the New Year is that cooler heads will prevail and that we transform our frustration into civilized civic engagement. Through the years I have worked with many different colleagues, regardless of political affiliation, to do what is best for our nation and for the people of Wisconsin. That will continue to be my approach in 2012.

Despite the current tone, I was able to make progress in a number of priority areas. I worked with colleagues to reinforce support for small business manufacturing, bolster food safety programs, promote and protect agricultural research and advance child nutrition. Additionally, I pressed for policies to fight elder abuse, to get generic drugs to the market faster, to improve the oversight of medical devices and to strengthen 401(k) retirement savings accounts.

I also had the great pleasure of traveling throughout Wisconsin and saw many positive steps forward. For example, last year I worked with the Navy to secure a contract for Marinette Marine to produce 10 Littoral Combat Ships (LCS). In October, I visited the shipyard for the keel laying of the USS Milwaukee and was encouraged to hear the LCS contract is helping the local economy and creating roughly 40 new jobs each month. Additionally, Congress passed a small business lending bill last year that is making a difference when it comes to lending here in Wisconsin. I have visited businesses and banks around the state that are working together to expand access to capital, create jobs and help the local economy.

The most gratifying parts of my year, as well as my time in the Senate, have been spent listening to and assisting you. Whether you've written to me about a piece of legislation or to share your thoughts on the direction of our country, or perhaps you contacted my office with a problem that needed added attention, my number one job is to listen and be responsive to you. For companies and

employees as well as those seeking work, for veterans and farmers, individuals and families, students and seniors, my office has always aimed to deliver first-rate customer service. We've tracked down back pay and hard-earned military medals. We've checked on Social Security applications, student loans, grant applications, agriculture programs and lending opportunities. From the complicated problems that take time to unravel to the short phone call looking for some quick guidance, we're here for you.

There is still much work to be done. I am looking forward to next year and the opportunity to continue working for the people of Wisconsin. May you and yours have a safe, relaxing holiday season and a happy new year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Herb Kohl". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.