



**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Non-partisan Group to Drive Midwest Priorities in D.C.**

*Former Governors Tommy Thompson and Ben Nelson to serve  
as co-chairmen of The Midwest Council*

**(Madison, WI)**– Improving the economic prosperity and quality of life for Midwest communities and businesses are primary objectives of the newly formed Midwest Council, Executive Director Tyler Foti announced today. The new non-partisan alliance will draw members from all economic sectors and address important policy issues that will arise and be debated in Washington D.C.

The Midwest Council is already up and running, with former HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson and former U.S. Senator Ben Nelson serving as co-chairmen, Foti said.

“The Midwest needs strong representation in Washington as policies are formulated, debated and implemented,” Foti explained. “We have a real opportunity to work collaboratively as a region to promote federal policies that grow economies, create jobs and improve the quality of life for Midwest residents and businesses.”

Thompson was the 42<sup>nd</sup> and longest serving Governor of the State of Wisconsin from 1987 to 2001. Thompson also served from 2001 to 2005 as the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS). Thompson has held numerous important posts including Chairman of AMTRAK, Independent Chairman of the Deloitte Center for Health Solutions and served, and continues to serve, on the boards of various other publicly and privately held entities and is currently the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Thompson Holdings. Thompson has been called a “pioneer” for two landmark initiatives, the Wisconsin Works welfare reform and school voucher programs. During his time as HHS Secretary, Thompson provided key leadership in the post 9-11 environment, reorganizing HHS, increasing funding to the National Institutes of Health, increased the responsiveness of the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid and working through the backlog of waiver requests thereby providing health insurance to 1.8 million low-income Americans.

Nelson has an equally storied political career, having served two terms as Governor of Nebraska and then two terms in the U.S. Senate, when he retired in January due to term limits. He was elected governor in 1990 in the state’s fourth-closest gubernatorial race in state history, and then was re-elected in 1994 with 74 percent of the vote. During his tenure, Nelson promoted policies that cut spending and taxes, reduced the state crime rate significantly, advocated for low-income families through a kids health care initiative, and enacted welfare reform. He currently is chief executive of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.

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The Midwest Council will recruit members from businesses, academic and health institutions, as well as public and private organizations of all sizes, Foti said. Members will represent a variety of industries and sectors, including agriculture, energy, financial services, health care, higher education, telecommunications and transportation.

“The Midwest Council will strive to establish progressive relationships between members and key federal policymakers, including members of Congress and leaders of key federal agencies,” Foti explained. “As a non-partisan organization, we will nurture collaboration with leaders on both sides of the political aisle, and work to maximize regional cooperation on a wide variety of issues.”

While members will be encouraged to continue to work individually on important national and regional issues, The Midwest Council will work in parallel through events and forums between Midwest states and Washington, D.C., serving as a valuable resource and articulating the voice of members to lawmakers and decision-makers who generate policies related to economic prosperity and quality of life issues, added Foti.

For more information about membership, contact Tyler Foti at (608) 227-0420 and visit the website at **[themidwestcouncil.com](http://themidwestcouncil.com)**

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