

Bowen Introduces “Heat & Eat” Legislation

Written by Wisconsin Assembly Democrats

Tuesday, 30 January 2018 13:12 - Last Updated Tuesday, 30 January 2018 13:30



Gov. Walker’s Wisconsin one of two states that has failed to adjust to 2014 federal SNAP cuts.

MADISON – In 2014, the federal government passed a farm bill that modified the formula by which certain states can help ensure hundreds of thousands of their most vulnerable residents have enough food to eat. By increasing the minimum low-income heating assistance benefit from \$1 to \$21, Wisconsin could restore an additional FoodShare benefit to over 250,000 residents who saw big cuts to their benefit as a result of the 2014 farm bill, and it wouldn’t cost any additional state tax dollars.



“Yesterday, Governor Walker announced a desperate, campaign year gimmick to shell out \$100 per child to adults with no income limits,” said Rep. **David Bowen** (D-Milwaukee). “Yet for four years, he has neglected to take simple action – which Republican and Democratic governors and legislatures have done nationwide – to bring back \$275 million of our hard earned federal tax dollars to make sure people can eat.”

Of the 15 states and Washington D.C. who participated in the Heat & Eat program, only New Jersey, by way of former Governor Christ Christie’s veto pen, joins Wisconsin in failing to adapt to federal law and instead letting thousands of our residents go hungry for no good reason.

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“In Michigan, a Republican governor and legislature managed to include Heat & Eat in their state budget the past two years,” Bowen said. “Yet in Wisconsin, Republicans are dead-set on stigmatizing our neighbors who are trapped in poverty, even when it means bringing in hundreds of millions of our own federal tax dollars to boost our economy.”

After nine years of a growing national economy, Wisconsin’s poverty rate still sits higher than it was when the Great Recession began in 2008.

“If the governor’s bizarre surge of interest in suddenly helping the people of our state were genuine, this would be high on his priority list,” said Bowen. “It is telling that this easy fix isn’t part of the governor’s special session on welfare.”