

Can you pay lower property taxes by simply saying no one lives in your neighbor's house? Under Wisconsin's "Dark Store" loophole, large corporate retailers can.

LA CROSSE, WI - Imagine if you could pay lower property taxes by simply saying no one lives in your neighbor's house. It sounds ridiculous but the sad reality is that large corporations are increasingly taking advantage of a legal loophole to avoid paying their fair share of local property taxes. As a result of this loophole, their tax burden is shifted onto main street businesses and local homeowners.

All across Wisconsin, large corporate retailers have challenged their property taxes by arguing that the value of their new property is the same as an abandoned, or "dark" property, in a different location. In many cases, the dark property being used to exploit this loophole is property that the corporation recently abandoned to move to a new location.

Wisconsin's "Dark Store" loophole is becoming a growing problem in municipalities of all sizes across the state. Wealthy corporations have rigged the system and taxpayers are left footing the bill.

In an effort to ensure tax fairness for working families and seniors, Democrats have introduced legislation to close this loophole and prevent corporations from using vacant, abandoned or dark properties as a comparison for determining the value of a fully operational and occupied building.



Given the overwhelming public support for this proposal, Democrats were hopeful that the legislature would approve this commonsense fix. Unfortunately, Republican lawmakers in Madison sided with special interest groups that have opposed tax fairness for homeowners and local businesses, thus killing the bill. Their failure to lead on this issue will result in homeowners paying millions more in property taxes for years to come.

The opportunity to achieve the American Dream is out of reach for many families in Wisconsin as Republicans continue to rig tax policies in favor of corporations and the wealthy while shifting more of the tax burden onto working families and seniors.

It is disappointing and frustrating that Republicans have adjourned for the session without addressing long-term solutions for tax fairness. Rather than throwing in the towel and calling it quits, we should work together to achieve Wisconsin’s full potential.

Despite these challenges, families know they can trust Democratic leaders to fight for commonsense solutions that promote fairness, expand opportunities and invest in our communities. Closing the “Dark Store” loophole is going to be a top priority for Democrats as we continue fighting to make Wisconsin a place where the next generation wants to live, work and raise a family.

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