

Local Taxpayers Still Paying for Republican K12 Cuts

Written by Wisconsin Assembly Democrats

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Property Taxpayers continue to vote to increase taxes to make up for state budget cuts.

MADISON - On Monday, Rep. Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh) released an updated memo he requested from the state's Legislative Fiscal Bureau on operating referenda passed for school districts that include the most recent November election results.

The memo shows since Governor Walker and Republicans have begun enacting their cuts to education, taxpayers in 139 school districts have agreed to raise their own property taxes through non-building school operating referenda by nearly \$630 million since 2011. The updated numbers show that since May 2016 when Rep. Hintz originally released the memo, 23 more referenda have received approval with \$20,380,000 in additional authority approved across the state.



"Wisconsin used to be a place where legislators from both sides of the aisle recognized that sufficiently funding public schools was a major priority," said Rep. Hintz. "Governor Walker and Republicans have clearly demonstrated they don't hold those same values. But taxpayers are showing through overwhelming approval levels and hundreds of millions of dollars in referenda, that funding public schools is still important to them."

Since taking control of state government, Governor Walker and Republicans have rapidly shifted priorities in the state. They have placed a strong emphasis on diverting hundreds of millions in state resources toward tax breaks that primarily benefit the wealthy and on expanding the school choice program. During this time, public school classrooms have been one of the biggest victims, receiving over one billion dollars in funding cuts.

"Taxpayers know what happens in states that don't invest in education," Rep. Hintz said. "This

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updated memo again demonstrates that Wisconsinites are willing to use money from their own pockets to avoid our children having to struggle under cuts to our public school classrooms. If Republicans were appropriately funding schools this simply would not be happening.”

“It is a constitutional obligation in Wisconsin to adequately fund equal opportunity, public education,” said Rep. Hintz. “Enough is enough. Our local schools should not have to go to referendum just to keep their doors open. Republicans in Madison should do their jobs and not push that cost onto the property taxpayer.”