



For Immediate Release
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LOCAL TAXPAYERS PAYING FOR REPUBLICAN K12 CUTS

MORE SCHOOL DISTRICTS VOTE TO INCREASE TAXES TO MAKE UP FOR STATE BUDGET CUTS

MADISON - Today, Rep. Gordon Hintz, a member of the budget-writing Joint Committee on Finance, released a memo he requested from the state's Legislative Fiscal Bureau on operating referendums passed for school districts. The memo shows that since Governor Walker and Republicans have begun enacting their cuts to education, taxpayers in 127 school districts have agreed to raise property taxes through non-building school operating referendums by over \$600 million.

"Until recently, Wisconsin was known as a place where legislators, regardless of their party affiliation, recognized that adequately funding and supporting our public schools must be a top priority," said Rep. Hintz. **"Governor Walker and Republicans have clearly demonstrated they don't hold those same values. But taxpayers are showing, with 80% approval levels and millions of dollars in referendums, that funding public schools is a priority."**

Since taking control five years ago, 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, our 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. **"For the last few years, they have demonstrated they are willing to take money out of their own pockets to attempt to avoid our children's education suffering under cuts to our public school classrooms. But our local schools should not have to go to referendum just to keep the lights on. If Republicans were adequately funding schools this simply would not be happening."**

This year alone 46 school districts had non-building operating referendums on the ballot. And since 2011 when Republicans started cutting public school funding, approval rates of referendums have jumped to over 80 percent, showing that Wisconsinites recognize the deep harm to public schools if nothing is done.

"The Governor and state legislators have a constitutional obligation to adequately fund equal opportunity public education," said Rep. Hintz. **"It's time for state government to make public schools a priority in Wisconsin. It is not fair to continue to push the cost of public school funding on to local property taxpayers."**

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