



WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DAVID BOWEN
10TH DISTRICT

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Rep. Bowen Statement on Passage of Biennial Budget Bill

"This Is Not the Budget My Constituents Asked For"

MADISON - In response to the passage earlier today of Assembly Bill (AB) 68, the biennial budget bill, State Rep. David Bowen (D-Milwaukee) released the following statement:

"Earlier today, after serious consideration I chose to vote no on the budget bill that was presented to us because, quite simply, it is not the budget my constituents asked for. I've received dozens upon dozens of contacts from my neighbors over the past few months, and they have all been very clear: Support the pro-worker, pro-education, pro-justice, pro-health, pro-growth and pro-Wisconsin provisions in Governor Evers' budget. We have a unique opportunity to double down on investments in people and equity. Unfortunately, the Republican-controlled Joint Committee on Finance either watered down those provisions to a point where they are almost unrecognizable, or stripped them from the final budget bill entirely. And although my Democratic colleagues and I attempted to introduce numerous amendments on the Floor to bring this budget more in line with what Governor Evers had originally proposed, Republicans chose to vote each one of those amendments down along party lines as well."

Earlier today, the Assembly voted to pass AB 68. Over the course of the day, Assembly Democrats introduced eight amendments that would have, among other things: accepted BadgerCare expansion and the federal dollars that would come with it, lowered prescription drug costs, increased education funding to historic levels, made important investments in agriculture and the environment, put Wisconsin in the best possible position for a significant economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, ended gerrymandering in our redistricting process, and made important investments and forward progress on criminal justice reform with me as lead. All of those amendments were voted down by Republicans.

"In particular, I was deeply disappointed to see the numerous missed opportunities that this Republican budget presents in the areas of equitable education and criminal justice reform. Instead of maintaining Governor Evers' commitment to fair funding to diverse low income districts or even meaningfully committing to increasing funding for our kids' classrooms, Republicans chose to instead redirect that funding to offer property tax relief - to the tune of only a few dollars a month per household. Instead of providing important and crime-reducing investments in violence prevention, restorative justice, treatment alternatives and diversion (TAD) and recidivism programs, or finally following through on our promise to close Lincoln Hills, Republicans chose to abdicate their responsibilities and maintain their ongoing commitment to a broken status quo.

Despite being offered many opportunities to amend this budget and correct the mistakes made by Republicans on the Joint Committee on Finance, including through my own amendment to add meaningful criminal justice reform back into the budget, my Republican counterparts refused to reconsider or compromise.

At this point, I am putting my hope and faith in Governor Evers' line item veto. If the Governor chooses to sign this budget, I trust that he will use his powers to make it as positive for the people of Wisconsin as possible."