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Representatives Brostoff, Bowen, Kessler, and Sinicki Take Stand Against Legislation Attacking Milwaukee Taxpayers, Local Control

MADISON – Representatives Jonathan Brostoff (D-Milwaukee), David Bowen (D-Milwaukee), Fred Kessler (D-Milwaukee), and Christine Sinicki (D-Milwaukee) stood together yesterday to oppose Assembly Bill 885 (AB) 885, which mandates a government takeover of Milwaukee County’s debt collection efforts.

AB 885 would require a state takeover of delinquent debts, such as from unpaid property taxes, and send them to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue for collections. This legislation would place a financial burden on Milwaukee’s taxpayers by requiring the use of a system that charges additional administration and collection fees and mandates a training program expected to cost one million dollars per year.

“In yet another attack on Milwaukee County, lawmakers have rushed through a bill that concentrates even more power in the hands of the county executive. AB 885 was introduced just last week, sent to a hearing and executive session yesterday, and is scheduled to be on the Assembly floor tomorrow,” said Rep. Kessler. “This does not provide enough time for the community to offer feedback or to work on amendments to the bill. It is an outrage.”

“The Milwaukee County comptroller, treasurer, and clerk of courts – the three elected county officials best equipped to handle delinquent debts – are all opposed to this legislation,” said Rep. Brostoff. “It puts an unfair burden on people struggling with debt, and traps our county in a potentially inefficient and expensive debt-collection program.”

“Milwaukee is the only county that this bill would affect. It is frustrating to see,” Rep. Bowen said. “This is really just debt shell game to place arena debt on the backs of already struggling Milwaukee residents without input from anyone in local municipal government except the person who requested the bill.”

“This is an arrogant, sneaky, and underhanded way to push an unpopular piece of legislation through,” said Representative Sinicki. “When a bill like this is forced through, there is no integrity in the process.”

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