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February 21, 2013
For Immediate Release

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Repealing Residency Requirements Has No Business Being in Budget

Madison – Today State Senator Tim Carpenter (D-Milwaukee) called on the Co-Chairs of the Joint Finance Committee to strip out policy items contained in Governor Walker’s Budget.

Last night Governor Walker made public his proposed state budget for Wisconsin. Much like a hidden needle in a haystack, there was one little sentence buried deep inside the bowels of his proposed budget.

This little sentence would repeal 127 local elected governments’ residency requirements for its public employees. Milwaukee’s policy on residency has been around since 1938.

This is a major policy item, not fiscal in nature, that has no business being in the state budget. In fact, legislators for many years have introduced separate bills repealing local residency requirements for public employees.

In addition Governor Walker is abandoning the long held conservative principal of respecting local control. The Governor’s new mantra must be I’m from Madison and I know what’s best for you.

Speaker Tip O’Neal believed that “All politics is local” and I agree; local elected officials are best suited to meet the needs of their communities since they are the ones closest to them.

Governor Walker has decided to run a “stick it to Milwaukee” campaign with his past and present budgets. If Wisconsin repeals local residency requirements it will have devastating consequences for Milwaukee.

Slipping a state repeal of local residency requirements in the budget violates the principals of respecting local control and the prohibition on jamming non-fiscal policy items in the state budget.

Even a NFL replacement referee could have gotten the call right on this one. It’s just too bad that the Governor couldn’t.

Senator Carpenter’s press releases are available for review at <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/sen03/news>

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