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Rep. Steffen Testifies in Support of Eliminating a Post-Retirement Perk for Legislators
Legislation would eliminate ability for legislators to accumulate unused sick leave

Madison- Today, Representative David Steffen (R-Howard) testified in favor of a bill he authored earlier this session that would eliminate the ability for state legislators to accrue unused sick leave which can be used to pay for health insurance premiums upon retirement. The bill (SB 183) received a public hearing today in the Senate Committee on Government Operations and Consumer Protection. Rep. Steffen testified alongside Senator Cowles (R-Green Bay), urging committee members to move forward in removing this costly, post-retirement benefit.

“As responsible stewards of our state’s finances, it is vital that we, as elected officials, hold ourselves to a high-level of financial accountability by removing excessive and unnecessary benefits. Today was an opportunity for me to speak with members of the committee as to why this is an issue deserving attention.

The sick leave conversion credit program has allowed for the accrual of millions of dollars in sick leave credits, a balance the state is responsible for if and when legislators decide to use them after reaching retirement. Ultimately, sick leave by legislators largely goes unused allowing it to accumulate, but the primary goal of sick leave should be to provide relief from one’s duties when ill. Instead of serving its primary purpose, sick leave for legislators has turned into an expensive post-retirement perk.” said Rep. Steffen.

As of March 31, 2015 the estimated value of total sick leave credits for all 132 legislators was \$2,411,600 and the available balance to retired legislators was approximately \$3.5 million at the close of 2014. The legislation Rep. Steffen authored will eliminate the accrual of any new sick leave beyond a legislator’s current term. The bill will now move on to be considered for a vote by the Senate committee.

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