



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Wisconsin Legislative Socialist Caucus responds to Republican Shared Revenue Local Government Takeover Proposal

Proposal would shackle local governments, provide insufficient funding

MADISON – Today all across the State, press conferences were held by Assembly Republicans to suggest, without detail, a new shared revenue plan that would both give fewer dollars to local municipalities and counties than what is in the Governor’s proposed budget and would strip budgetary and policy autonomy away from local units of government. These meager funds come tied to a host of conditions that would dictate many aspects of public life including schools, law enforcement, and property taxes. The broader proposal would mandate that law enforcement budgets across the state continue to rise year after year; additional proposed stipulations apply only to the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County.

These regressive, punitive policy barbs seek to undo the vital work of groups like Leaders Igniting Transformation, Milwaukee Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, and many others. This proposal undermines their important work of making local government more responsive and accountable.

The Governor’s proposed budget already contains provisions for substantially more shared revenue without the attacks on the ability of local governments to set their own budgets or policy priorities.

Representatives Madison (D-10) and Representative Clancy (D-19) issued the following statement:

“Like so many other Milwaukee residents, we know well the harm caused by the intentional and continued underfunding of the City and County. As residents, organizers and electeds, it is beyond frustrating to see how often we fail to meet the needs of our people - from housing, to transit, to basic investments in infrastructure and public spaces - because we simply don’t have the funds available to do so. We are grateful that, finally, there seems to be consensus from elected leaders across the state on the dire need for more shared revenue funding for our municipalities and counties.

And yet we also know full well that local leaders - not those hundreds of miles away - are best equipped to know what the interests and priorities of their constituents are. The Republican plan suggested today strips away local budgetary control from both municipalities and counties, tying their hands and revoking the ability of local government to meet the needs of the people they represent.

Any reasonable person can look at the fiscal problems within the City of Milwaukee and realize quickly that we are in this crisis both because of a lack of shared revenue and because nearly half of the city budget - and Milwaukee’s ability to provide essential services - is devoured by the Milwaukee Police Department. The Republican plan for a city drowning in police is merely more police and less accountability: it’s a life preserver made of lead. Milwaukee, and all communities across the state, deserves to be able to invest in what will actually make our neighborhoods better and safer. This does the opposite.

We oppose any plan that would strip local control away from governments or expand the already massive and harmful footprint of law enforcement.”

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