



JESSIE RODRIGUEZ

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 21ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Rep. Jessie Rodriguez

June 28, 2019
(608) 266-0610

Support for Schools, Healthcare and the Middle Class

MADISON – On Tuesday, the Wisconsin State Assembly passed a two-year budget plan with the State Senate following suit on Wednesday afternoon. As expected, the bill passed both houses on what was primarily a party line vote; not one of our Democratic colleagues voted for the bill.

The state budget is arguably the most important bill the legislature will consider this session. It funds a variety of crucial state programs, including healthcare, K-12 education, roads and bridges, the UW System, and a number of state funded programs that our residents use on a daily basis.

This bill is now headed to Gov. Evers' desk. The governor has three options at his disposal: he can veto the budget in its entirety, forcing the legislature to start the month's long process all over again. He can use the powerful line-item veto, allowing him to remove certain portions of the budget, or he can sign the budget into law.

If unchanged, the governor's budget proposal would have resulted in irresponsible spending and massive tax hikes, which would have hurt middle-class families the most. This was not an option.

The final budget passed by the Legislature not only eliminated Gov. Evers tax increases, but reduced income taxes by \$500 million and spending by \$2 billion compared to the governor's budget. Signing this budget into law gives the governor the opportunity to keep his campaign promise of reducing taxes for the middle class. He vetoed a middle class tax cut approved by Republicans earlier this year.

If the governor vetoes the budget in its entirety, it could have a devastating impact on our schools, on constituents that rely on roads and bridges, and some of our most vulnerable populations like the elderly.

Healthcare was an issue last fall that took center stage frequently. Rather than spend recklessly, Republicans chose a more sustainable path that dovetails resources for healthcare in ways that reduce costs associated with staff shortages and turnover in elder care. Such resources include \$94 million for nursing homes, personal care workers, and direct caregivers.

Under the amended budget, schools will receive an additional \$500 million in new funding that includes a 22 percent increase for special education and \$12.5 million for mental health services. Schools in districts like mine -- that are low spending and frugal -- have made clear this funding increase isn't a luxury, but a necessity. Vetoing the budget would hurt schools all across the state that have built their budgets around this expected funding increase.

Transportation infrastructure is a long-term investment that requires sensible funding. This budget made a historic investment in transportation without raising the gas tax. Local roads and state highways will see a significant revenue increase to get projects done quickly and on-schedule.



JESSIE RODRIGUEZ

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 21ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Vetoing the budget would erase \$155 million dollars for local roads and an overall increase in transportation funding of \$487 million. Bridges would go unfixed and local roads and highways would continue to deteriorate. It should not be an option the governor is considering because too much is at stake for our children, vulnerable populations, and those dependent on a reliable transportation system.

The state budget has never been vetoed in its entirety. This budget should not be the first. It's time to do what's right and sign this budget for the people of Wisconsin.

###