



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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State Legislature Passes Sheriff Sale Fairness Legislation

Wisconsin counties will have important tools to target bad actors and increase auction sale competition

MADISON—Today the Wisconsin State Senate passed bipartisan legislation authored by Rep. Terry Katsma (R–Oostburg) and Rep. Evan Goyke (D–Milwaukee) that makes common-sense changes to Wisconsin’s sheriff sale process. The Assembly previously passed both bills on January 23rd.

The legislation follows on reporting by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel titled *Landlord Games*, which uncovered a small number of delinquent landlords who acquire new rental properties at sheriff auctions and turn a profit by manipulating loopholes in the system, while the properties linger perpetually in poor condition holding down property values and adding to neighborhood instability.

- Assembly Bill 690 enables counties to host (or contract with a licensed Wisconsin auctioneer to host) sales of foreclosed properties via an Internet-based auction, making the process more accessible and transparent for bidders and investors in the neighborhoods that need them most.
- Assembly Bill 691 prohibits a buyer from acquiring a new property at a sheriff sale if the buyer is already more than 120 days delinquent on property taxes or building code judgments.

“We put our heads together to find some solutions that we think make sense for every community,” explained Rep. Katsma. “Rep. Goyke serves a district that was among the hardest hit during the housing crisis; I have experience in banking and business; and together we developed some fundamental improvements to the system. I thank him for his effort, and I also thank our colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their support.”

In December 2016, Rep. Goyke invited Rep. Katsma to his home in Milwaukee and both legislators attended a sheriff sale of foreclosed Milwaukee properties.

“Today has been over a year in the making and I am proud to have authored this legislation with Rep. Katsma. I thank him for coming to Milwaukee and spending a day with me in my community. We stood in the same room with people who already own hundreds of rental properties, on which they owe tens of thousands of dollars in taxes and fines, and watched as the government awarded them winning bids for new properties. That ends now,” Rep. Goyke commented following today’s passage of the legislation.

“These bills will help stabilize neighborhoods, reduce crime, and increase property values in neighborhoods throughout the state that need it the most.”

The legislation now heads to Governor Scott Walker for his signature.

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