



For Immediate Release  
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## Republicans Vote against Closing 'Dark Store' Loophole

*Tax burden continues to shift to local homeowners due to Republican inaction*

MADISON – Today, Assembly Republicans voted against closing the 'Dark Store Loophole'. Based on a Supreme Court decision, big box retailers are allowed to base their tax assessments on their value as a vacant store rather than a store in operation. This so-called 'Dark Store Loophole' saves corporate retailers millions of dollars and shifts the property tax burden residential and small business taxpayers. Assembly Democratic Leader Representative Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh) released the following statement on the Assembly Republicans vote against closing this loophole.

***"Let me be clear, failing to take legislative action on this issue is making a decision," said Rep. Hintz. "Assembly Republicans decision to vote against bringing AB 386 to the floor today or any day this legislative session is telling. This is a green light for a growing number of retailers - large and small - to contest their assessments. Continued inaction results in lost revenue that will increasingly be made up by increased property taxes on residential homeowners and small businesses."***

Assembly Democrats made a motion on the floor to pull the bill from committee for a vote on the floor. Every Assembly Republican but one voted against the motion. Despite having a majority of the Assembly as co-sponsors, the majority party voted against the bill. Even the bill's author voted against taking up the bill he helped write.

***"Communities across the state have asked us to fix this loophole. Local governments are asking us for relief from the expense of costly legal fights against well-funded national retailers. I have never met a homeowner who thinks they need to pay more in property taxes so that a large national retailer can receive an unfair tax break. Today's vote by Assembly Republicans was effectively endorsing a continued shift in the property tax burden to local homeowners."***

To cite just a few examples of retailers using the dark store loophole to avoid paying taxes:

- Using the Dark Store Loophole, Menards reduced the value of its property in Fond du Lac, from \$9.2 million to \$5.2 million.
- A CVS property in Appleton reduced the value of its property from \$4.4 million to \$1.8 million. Local taxpayers are now on the hook for a \$350,000 refund.

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