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Residency Repeal Complicates Bradley Center Plans

“Who is going to pay for a new Bradley Center if residency repeal removes the middle-class tax base from Milwaukee?”

Madison – Today State Senator Tim Carpenter released the following statement regarding the effects on repealing residency will have on plans to tax locals for a new Bradley Center.

“Governor Walker’s inclusion in the budget of a provision voiding Milwaukee’s 75-year old residency requirements for public employees may have consequences he and like-minded Republicans may not have expected.

We all know that eliminating residency is Governor Walker’s political pay-off to Milwaukee’s police and fire unions for their early and unwavering campaign support. The unrelenting urgency with which police and fire unions have sought this change in law foreshadows their eager exodus from Milwaukee. This modern-day reenactment of the 1889 Land Rush will be devastating for Milwaukee’s local economy. So far, this appears not to have bothered the governor one bit.

However, we also hear the open secret that Governor Walker and the Greater Milwaukee Committee (GMC) are plotting a deal to build a brand-new Bradley Center – and that they want local taxpayers to be saddled with the bill. The big question apparently not considered: ‘How can Milwaukee taxpayers afford to pick up the tab of several hundred million “bucks” to replace to current Bradley Center, if middle-class public employees leave the city?’

The answer, of course, is that they can’t. Removing police, fire fighter, and other public employee contributions in property taxes and spending in the Milwaukee economy would be devastating. The Milwaukee area business community needs to actively and strongly oppose Governor Walker’s state repeal of local residency requirements in the state budget. Our economy just can’t afford it.

Governor Walker and Republican legislators may choose, like former governor Thompson famously said, to ‘stick it to Milwaukee’ with new local taxes for the new sports stadium for their GMC buddies.

But my constituents who are worried about the drop in Milwaukee property values due to residency repeal are not buying it. My constituents are in no mood to accept politicians in Madison taking the economic life out of Milwaukee, then increasing local taxes for a new Bradley Center. And neither am I.”

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