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## Stafsholt Votes to Enact 2025-27 State Budget

**Madison** – Both chambers of the Wisconsin Legislature met on Wednesday to vote to approve the 2025-27 biennial state budget. Senator Rob Stafsholt (R – New Richmond), a member of the Joint Finance Committee, voted in favor of the budget agreement struck between Governor Evers and legislative leadership. The compromise delivered on the Republican priority of \$1.5 billion in tax cuts, especially for middle-class families and seniors, as well as funding for several of Governor Evers’ initiatives. Notably, one of Senator Stafsholt’s top legislative priorities, establishing a Dairy Innovation Program to support Wisconsin’s family dairy farms, was fully funded in the budget to the tune of \$20 million.

**“This budget is far from perfect, with high spending increases, but I voted to approve it because we were able to extract serious concessions from Governor Evers on tax cuts and spending reductions, as well as a few important wins for rural Wisconsin,”** Senator Stafsholt remarked after casting his vote to approve the budget. **“The fact of the matter is, Wisconsin elected divided government, and it is our job to work together to deliver a reasonable budget for the people of our state. While I am disappointed in the spending levels in this budget, I think we have to remember where we started: with a budget request from the Governor that totaled \$122 billion. The fact that we were able to cut that back by \$8 billion and add-in tax cuts at the same time is a serious improvement.”**

Governor Evers delivered his state budget proposal in February, which was quickly seen as a non-starter by many in the Legislature as it proposed a vast increase in spending over last biennium’s \$98.6 billion. Senator Stafsholt was concerned about the price tag of the Governor’s budget, but also saw major issues with the content of the proposal. While the Governor claimed that he had delivered a balanced budget proposal, he was only able to do so by raising taxes on Wisconsinites by a net \$2.34 billion and setting the state up for large structural deficits going forward. The Governor had also proposed funding cuts that effectively gutted the popular and effective Agricultural Roads Improvement Program (ARIP), as well as plans for staggering license fee increases for Wisconsin’s hunters, trappers, and fishermen.

On the Joint Finance Committee, Senator Stafsholt was able to advocate against some proposals that put rural Wisconsin on the hook for spending increases. **“The sad part about getting the Governor’s budget was seeing him once again demonstrate his favoritism of Madison and Milwaukee over our rural area. I get that up here, we are not the majority of his base, but he signed up to serve all Wisconsinites,”** Senator Stafsholt remarked. **“I tried to be a voice for our rural communities during this budget process and was pleased that I secured funding for my Dairy Innovation bill, helped restore ARIP funding, canceled the license increases on sportsmen, and that we could get the Governor on board with tax relief for the hard-working people of Wisconsin.”**

Governor Evers took action on the budget early Thursday morning and exercised his line-item veto to remove various provisions. One of the more concerning actions taken by the Governor was his elimination of new positions at the Legislative Audit Bureau, at the same time as the Legislature is experiencing long wait times on getting audits done to use to make important decisions. **“It’s not saying much, but I’m glad this session’s veto was more modest than his action last session to raise property taxes yearly for the next 400 years. However, I find it puzzling why Governor Evers wouldn’t want to increase government accountability and am disappointed that the taxpayers will be deprived of greater transparency from the government that’s supposed to be representing them,”** Senator Stafsholt concluded.

*Senator Stafsholt represents Wisconsin’s 10<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which includes all of Buffalo, Pepin, Pierce, and St. Croix counties, as well as portions of Dunn and Trempealeau counties.*

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