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Senator Mark Spreitzer: Statement on Shared Revenue Increase for Local Government

MADISON - In response to the Wisconsin State Senate's passage of legislation on Wisconsin's shared revenue formula, Senator Mark Spreitzer (D-Beloit) released the following statement:

"Yesterday, the Wisconsin State Senate took up a critical local funding bill that will provide desperately needed resources to our local communities, prevent Milwaukee from going off a fiscal cliff, and repeal outdated and burdensome taxes on small businesses. After past legislatures froze the shared revenue formula and cut aid to local communities, our local officials have been forced to make difficult decisions about which critical services they fund each year.

"In 2011, I was one of those local officials who was forced to reduce positions for police officers and firefighters when the state cut our funding. After that experience, I ran for state office to try to increase the state's support for our local governments. This is the first time in decades that the Legislature has meaningfully increased shared revenue.

"This bill will provide local governments in the 15th Senate District with more than \$13.3 million in new shared revenue - a 44% increase. Across our district, it provides \$1.6 million more for towns, \$5.8 million more for cities and villages, and \$5.9 million more for counties. I have heard from local officials throughout my district who need this funding to avoid cuts to services like police, fire, EMS, libraries, swimming pools, and parks because the state's commitment hasn't kept up.

"Even with this substantial increase in funding, we still need to provide more money for our rural communities and work to fix the inequities in the funding formula that hurt midsize communities like Janesville. I voted to pass this bill because all of our communities desperately need the new state funding it provides right now, and I will work to ensure that the Legislature comes back to increase this funding without waiting another 20 years to do so.

"I will also be working to repeal the irrelevant and damaging policy provisions jammed into this bill by Republicans. From stopping local voters from expressing their opinions through advisory referendums to restrictions on local efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, the Legislature should not be giving money with one hand while taking away local control with the other. I trust our local elected officials to make decisions in the best interests of the communities they represent.

"This bill is a true compromise, and is the best that we could achieve with the current Republican legislative leadership. As the ranking Democratic member on the Senate committee on shared revenue, I was proud to work with Governor Evers to propose ways to improve this bill throughout the process. Without those changes, this would have been a worse bill, and I thank the Governor for his partnership and efforts on behalf of our state.

"I look forward to working with local leaders as they put the funding that this bill provides to good use on behalf of our shared constituents. Together, we will do what is best for our communities."

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15th SENATE DISTRICT