



DIANNE H. HESSELBEIN

STATE SENATOR • SENATE DISTRICT 27

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 9, 2023

Contact: Sen. Dianne Hesselbein (608) 266-6670

LET'S INCREASE SHARED REVENUE

Public safety professionals on our police forces, fire departments and rescue services, clean and safe streets in good repair, parks and green spaces, and other vital services all depend on resources for our local communities that find themselves increasingly strained and reliant on property taxes.

At the state level, we have a great responsibility to these priorities and greater resources to address them. Let's increase shared revenue.

After two budgets in which the Governor's very reasonable calls for increased revenue authority and state support for our local services have been removed from his budgets, our communities are facing significant challenges. Working with the numerous communities across the 27th Senate District, these challenges are becoming more and more clear.

For more than a decade now shared revenue has languished. Even before the recent and well-known budget surplus, state revenues have been allowed to grow year after year, budget after budget while strict limits on the growth of local budgets have combined with stagnant state aid to squeeze vital local priorities.

And while state resources have been too often dedicated to questionable priorities, lack of state aid has ballooned the local reliance on property taxes.

In recent weeks, I've covered some of the misplaced priorities that have bedeviled recent state budgets. It was recently revealed that the ill-conceived Gableman investigation has cost state taxpayers \$2 million. This sum is more startling when compared to what our local communities have received from the same state coffers.

For comparison purposes, in a sample stretching from north to south in the 27th Senate District, the Town of Baraboo, Sauk County, the City of Verona, Iowa County and the Village of New Glarus combined were due to receive less in county and municipal aid than was spent on the Gableman farce.

The men and women performing actual investigations to protect the public, not to mention those who staff our fire stations, repair our streets, strive to keep our neighborhoods safe and clean and attract vital economic development and jobs to our communities, certainly deserve more from the state.

We cannot back our men and women in blue without providing the green. As the legislative body with the purse strings, there is no higher responsibility we have than to those who answer the call -- and few if any higher priorities in this budget than to end the punitive approach to our local partners.

That's why I was so happy to hear the Governor's unique and thoughtful proposal to dedicate more support to vital local services. And I am glad to see my Republican colleagues demonstrate some openness to the idea of increased support.

If this is truly a new day, let's start by living up to this most important of our commitments.

###