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Wisconsin GOP Refuses to Act on K-12 Funding

After Wisconsin's Legislative Fiscal Bureau announced that Wisconsin would have just over \$450 million dollars in additional revenue, Governor Tony Evers announced a plan that would use that money to cut property taxes, help fund K-12 public schools (including \$19 million set aside for mental health needs in schools), and set aside money for the state's rainy day fund.

Wisconsin Republicans rejected this plan outright, without even meeting with the Governor to attempt to work out a compromise. Instead, they proposed a different use of the surplus- using the funds exclusively to cut taxes. Despite Republicans' previous promise to return Wisconsin to a two-thirds funding threshold, their plan has no funding for schools- but does include a \$45 million tax cut to businesses.

Due to years of GOP underfunding education, we have seen school districts pass an innumerable amount of referenda to fund schools. Homeowners have been willingly raising their own property taxes to help school children. They need property tax relief. However, by not funding schools, the Republican plan merely delays the inevitable. Property owners may see more money in their pockets from the property tax cut, but that money will not stay there long when voters have to go to referendum again to make sure their school can keep the lights on.

Governor Evers plan is more prudent and fiscally responsible. By cutting property taxes as well as funding schools, his plan would ensure that any property tax relief seen would actually stay in the pockets of Wisconsin homeowners. Not only would Gov. Evers' plan fund schools and provide \$130 million in property tax relief, it also actually leaves more money in the state's rainy-day fund than the GOP plan.

Unfortunately, the Wisconsin GOP is more concerned with petty partisan games and campaign talking points than finding solutions that work for Wisconsinites which both sides can agree on. Because of their unwillingness to work with Democrats on the other side of the aisle, it looks like there will be no property tax relief at all. Democrats are ready and willing to come to the table and work with our Republican colleagues to provide needed tax relief to Wisconsin taxpayers, but Republicans continue to disdain sharing credit for anything positive that affects Wisconsin. Until they are ready, or until they are made the minority in the legislature, Wisconsin taxpayers will continue to suffer.

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