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Assembly Speaker Mike Huebsch Statement: Surprised and Disappointed in Governor Doyle Walking Away from Budget Talks

Madison... Assembly Speaker Mike Huebsch released the following statement today in response to Governor Doyle's call for a special legislative session on the state budget:

"I am surprised and disappointed that Governor Doyle is walking away from the negotiations in order to call for immediate action on an unfinished product.

"Legislators have been working toward compromise on the state budget for months now, and have only recently begun making progress on the number one issue facing Wisconsin families: taxes. Republicans remain committed, as we have been at every step of this process, to getting a budget done that puts Families First and puts the needs of the taxpayers ahead of the wants of the government.

"Despite our progress, the two sides remain far apart when it comes to taxes and spending, with Democrats refusing to yield on a number of taxes that have a real impact on Wisconsin families. Their most recent offer still increases spending by more than \$1.1 billion over the Assembly budget, and raises taxes by \$956 million.

"As Governor Doyle himself said in his State of the State speech in 2003: Wisconsin's problem isn't that we tax too little, it's that we spend too much.

"During our budget negotiations, Republicans have consistently worked with Governor Doyle and Senate Democrats to find areas of consensus and compromise. We went to their number on K-12 education and restored Shared Revenue funding. Two weeks ago we offered to remove all non-fiscal policy from the budget. Most recently we offered to increase financial aid and funding to the University of Wisconsin system. We restored funding to the state's Compensation Reserves and the Department of Corrections. We funded the governor's BadgerCare Plus program and FamilyCare expansion. Our efforts have been to find compromise and work toward getting the job done right.

"And we have consistently had an eye on the bottom line – making sure to keep our government in line with the taxpayers' ability to pay. Wisconsin is the eighth highest-taxed state in the nation, and we owe it to our hard-working families to do what's right with the money they provide, not spend our time looking for ways to take more when we can do the job with less."

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