

Joint Finance Committee Democrats: Succeed in achieving removal of non- fiscal policy from budget

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MADISON – Today, the co-chairs of the legislature’s Joint Finance Committee (JFC) announced that 83 non-fiscal policy items in the budget should not be addressed in the budget, and will instead be drafted as separate legislation. JFC Democrats have long called for the removal of non-fiscal policy items from the budget, including in a joint letter to the co-chairs dated March 22, 2017.

Some of the non-fiscal policy items identified by the co-chairs for removal include:

- Unfunded mandates on the UW, including new degree and transfer requirements, faculty workload policies, and a student allocable segregated fee opt-out provision.
- Repeal of the prevailing wage and project labor agreements.
- Creation of an Occupational License Review Council and the elimination of certain state boards and councils.
- A study on the transfer of CAFO oversight from the DNR to DATCP.

“As members of the budget committee, we’ve heard from people across Wisconsin who have concerns about the drastic licensing changes, repeal of important worker

protections, and unfunded mandates on our schools and universities in the budget,” said Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point). ““Never underestimate the power of people’s voices – I encourage everyone to keep the pressure up.”

“Governor Walker has lots of friends in the legislature and he can work non-budget items through the legislature the correct way, with public input and vetting in committee in stand-alone legislation. I am glad the co-chairs are responding to pressure to remove many policy items – it is the right thing to do,” said Sen. Jon Erpenbach (D-Middleton).

“With the unfair non-fiscal policy portion of the budget out, I shift my concern to the transportation fund,” said Sen. Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee). “I worry that Republicans plan to balance the transportation fund on the backs of our children’s’ school funding increase.”

“Thanks to the tremendous public input the committee has received, a number of harmful provisions have been slated for removal from the budget,” said Rep. Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh). “JFC Democrats have asked for the budget to be limited to fiscal items only, and I’m pleased that our request was heard by the co-chairs today.”

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