

# League of Wisconsin Municipalities: A Big win for taxpayers!

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Today's unanimous bipartisan vote by the Senate Committee on Revenue, Financial Institutions, and Rural Issues to recommend passage of the Dark Store and Walgreens reversal bills was an enormous win for Wisconsin taxpayers. We urge the Senate leadership to quickly schedule the bills for passage and stop the shift of property taxes away from national retailers and onto locally-owned businesses and homes. Without this legislation in place, property taxes for manufacturers, homeowners, and main street business WILL increase, revenues to local schools and communities will not change, and the only winners will be national retailers.

The League thanks Senator Roger Roth, Senator DUEY Stroebel, and Representative Rob Brooks, the lead authors of SB 291 and SB 292 (and their Assembly companions, AB 386 and AB 387). We congratulate all five members of the committee and the more than 50 co-authors of both bills. You can be proud of your support for taxpayers.

Now let's finish the job. We urge the authors, co-authors, committee members, and the taxpayers of Wisconsin to call on Senate leaders to schedule both SB 291 and SB 292 for a vote. Both bills have been scrutinized, subject to overwhelming public hearing support, and are ready to go. Property taxpayers are counting on you.

## Background

Senate Bill 291 closes a loophole created by a 2008 Wisconsin Supreme Court decision. That decision overturned decades of property assessment practice and allowed national chain pharmacy store owners to claim their buildings were worth less than half what they sold for on the open market. No homeowner or apartment building owner can get such a huge tax break.

Senate Bill 292 limits the circumstances where abandoned "dark stores" can be

used as comparable properties to establish the market value of thriving large retail establishments. The dark store theory has been used repeatedly in recent years by national retailers to cut their property tax assessments in Wisconsin and elsewhere.

Passage of these bills will not increase revenue to local government, nor will it change current assessment practices for non-national-retail properties. This legislation keeps national retail stores on the same plain as locally-owned properties, and assures they cannot shift their share of the tax load to others.