

One Wisconsin Now: Despicable Duey: Legislator Exploiting Loopholes to Cut His Own Taxes Wants To Hike Property Taxes on People Voting to Support Their Public Schools

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MADISON, Wis. — As part of a series of proposals to restrict local decision making about public schools Republican State Sen. Duey Stroebel is pushing a property tax increase on communities that approve referenda to support their local public schools. One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Scot Ross blasted the scheme for punishing communities willing to step up and support their local public schools after legislators like Stroebel have cut state support for public education by record amounts.

“The same gang that cut our state public schools by record amounts now wants to punish communities voting to support their public schools with retaliatory property tax increases,” commented Ross. “The hypocrisy of Duey Stroebel and his Republican cohorts knows no bounds.”

The bill, currently being circulated by Stroebel for sponsorship by state legislators,

would impose a punitive reduction in state general school aid of 20 percent of the amount of a referendum approved by voters in a district to exceed state imposed revenue caps to fund the operations of their schools. Local property taxes could then be increased to make up for the cut in state aid.

As a member of the Assembly, Stroebel voted for 2011 state budget that imposed the largest cuts to public education in state history to instead recklessly give away billions of dollars in state tax giveaways to the wealthy and big corporations.

Ross noted that while Stroebel is proposing property tax increases as retaliation on communities that support their public schools, he's happy to take money from the public to lower his own taxes. Publicly available state and federal records and media reports reveal State Sen. Duey Stroebel has taken tens of thousands of dollars in state and federal government subsidies and tax breaks while routinely reporting no personal state income tax liability. Stroebel resides in a million dollar plus mansion and owns over 300 acres in the immediate area of his estate.

According to a newspaper reports and review of government records Stroebel, who is not a farmer, has received federal U.S. Department of Agriculture subsidies totalling over \$63,000. He has also enrolled large tracts of property comprising his estate in the state Managed Forest Land program that provides breaks of up to 75 percent on property taxes for owners of enrolled properties.

In addition, while grabbing tax subsidies, records reveal Stroebel has also avoided state taxes in at least two years. As reported in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, he "reported owing no state income taxes" in 2009 and 2010.

He concluded, "Duey Stroebel has exploited every loophole he can to try to cut the taxes he pays on his mansion and 300 acre estate and now he want to slap a property tax increase on people who vote to support their public schools by passing referenda. That's despicable."