

Rep. Brandtjen: Forever is a long, long time

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Madison – State Representative Janel Brandtjen (R- Menomonee Falls) issued the following statement regarding Assembly Bill 268 which would prohibit taxing authorities from offering referendums that would increase taxes on a permanent basis. The bill not only gives the taxpayers a voice every five years, the taxing authorities would need to demonstrate to the residents the continuing need for the increased revenue.

“Referendums allow communities to approve additional spending at the local level for school expenses. Many referendums pertain to building new schools or making vast capital improvements. Voters can vote to approve for instance, \$20 million for a grade school or sports complex. The money is borrowed over a 20 year period and at the end of the bonding period spending returns to normal. However, most operating referendums allow the school district to spend over and above the revenue limits set by the state on a permanent basis, forever, without transparency. Since the extra spending goes on indefinitely, school officials have no incentive to cut the additional spending after the need for the additional revenue goes away. We can all agree that as our communities change, our needs change as well. Under AB 268, school districts will need to renew “forever” referendums every five years and voters will be given the opportunity to decide how their money is spent. After all, forever is a long, long time.”