

Rep. Shankland: Response to Governor Walker's Budget Address

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MADISON - Today, Governor Walker delivered his budget address and outlined his budget proposal for the 2017-19 biennium. Representative Shankland (D-Stevens Point), a member of the legislature's Joint Committee on Finance, released the following statement in response:

"Today Governor Walker presented a budget that essentially admits that the Republican cuts to our public schools and universities have failed Wisconsin. After years of slash and burn budgets, it is telling that the governor's budget proposal attempts to repair the damage he's caused. It's no coincidence that this budget comes at a time when he's running for reelection and is at 40% approval among the people of Wisconsin.

"This budget does not undo the damage that Republicans have done to our public schools and universities. Under Governor Walker's last three budgets, public schools have lost over \$1 billion in state aid and dozens of referenda have passed as taxpayers raised their own taxes to keep their neighborhood schools open. The UW system is at its lowest level of state support in its history, and faculty layoffs and course bottlenecks are plaguing students who want to graduate on time.

"This budget doesn't prioritize our roads and bridges, which are ranked as some of the worst in the nation. Delaying road projects cost taxpayers more. Relying on bonding costs taxpayers more. Refusing to lead on transportation costs taxpayers more. The governor's transportation proposal is weak and low-energy. This budget also attacks hard-working people by eliminating prevailing wage and project labor agreements, furthering the governor's track record of harming middle class wages.

"Governor Walker is gambling with taxpayer money and our health care by moving

to self-insurance, which could cost taxpayers up to \$100 million and put well-paying jobs at risk. This proposal costs more in risk than it does in gains.

“This budget is Governor Walker’s attempt to save face after abandoning Wisconsin to run for president two years ago. He has already proven that he will put his ambitions before our children’s. A real budget would keep our health care strong, restore the cuts to our education systems, and invest in our crumbling roads and bridges. I look forward to advocating for a budget that works for everyone as a member of the Joint Finance Committee.”