

Rep. Thiesfeldt: Education, tax cuts, and Hwy 23 priorities as budget passes assembly

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Madison, WI – Rep. Jeremy Thiesfeldt (R-52 Fond du Lac) voted last night in favor of the 2017-19 Wisconsin state budget (Assembly Bill 64). The budget passed 57-39 and now heads to the State Senate for final legislative approval. The budget is highlighted by historic boosts to Wisconsin's K-12 schools, complete elimination of some long-standing taxes, continuation of the freeze of UW tuition for two more years, and a plan for funding the rehabilitation of Hwy. 23 improvements east of Fond du Lac.

Rep. Thiesfeldt stated, "Budgets are about priorities, and taxpayers consistently stress to me the importance of lower taxes, appropriate funding for schools and transportation, and living within our means. This budget meets these priorities by responsibly investing Wisconsin families' hard earned money. This budget includes no state tax increases, maintains the largest rainy day fund in state history, projects to end with a nearly \$200 million surplus, and protects the nation's best-managed state pension system."

Examples of tax reform in the budget include: the State Property Tax, found on everyone's annual property tax bill, will no longer exist and saves property owners annually \$180 million; the Alternative Minimum Tax will also be wiped clean from the books; begins the repeal of the Personal Property Tax which increases the costs of products we all purchase and use everyday. This budget keeps the average property tax burden lower than what they were in 2010, 2014, and today, and plays a direct role in the Fond du Lac School District's recent announcement of a 3.5% projected drop in tax bills.

Thiesfeldt continued, “The education budget continues to put Wisconsin’s children first. It increases funding by over \$200/year/pupil for public, charter, virtual, and choice students, establishes a path to fairness for long-time frugal low spending districts by raising the floor of their minimum funding levels, provides an additional \$16 million for special education and mental health services, rewards schools that connect special needs students to employment, and boosts revenue for rural schools through additional sparsity aid and transportation aid. The extension of the UW tuition freeze to a 5th and 6th year provides more savings for UW students beyond the \$6,300 saved over the last four years. These accomplishments give the flexibility our families need to educate their children in the way they deem most beneficial.”

The proposed budget also allocates money to overcome the legal roadblocks of the rehabilitation of Highway 23 from Fond du Lac to Plymouth.

“Communication with constituents tells me that Highway 23 safety is the biggest issue in the 52nd District. After seeing many delays orchestrated by a litigious environmental extremist group, this budget bill contains a plan to fund this project. With this provision it is possible construction may begin as early as next fall.”

“It was an easy decision to vote for this budget, and I look forward to be another 2 years of growth for our community and state,” Thiesfeldt concluded.