

Sen. Shilling: GOP proposes school cuts, transportation debt to finance tax breaks for the wealthy

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MADISON – School budgets and road projects across Wisconsin continue to face an uncertain future two weeks after Republicans failed to meet the budget deadline. Despite having total control of the statehouse, Gov. Walker and legislative Republicans are unwilling to reign in tax breaks for wealthy individuals and corporations that outsource Wisconsin jobs. In their latest proposal, Senate Republicans want to further expand tax breaks for the wealthy while cutting funding for rural schools and borrowing millions on the state’s credit card.

“Time and time again, Republicans have prioritized tax breaks for the wealthy that syphon money away from our crumbling roads and local schools,” said Senate Democratic Leader Jennifer Shilling (D-La Crosse). “Wisconsin’s budget stalemate could be easily solved by eliminating tax breaks for millionaires and using revenue to boost school aid, fund road projects and reduce property taxes.”

The average Wisconsin worker pays a larger share of their income in taxes than those individuals in the top one percent. As a result of new Republican tax breaks, 11 individuals making more than \$30 million a year will get \$22.2 million in tax breaks this year. The non-partisan legislative Fiscal Bureau estimates these tax breaks will have cost the state more than \$1.4 billion by the end of the 2017-19 biennium.

“The opportunity to achieve the American Dream is out of reach for many families in Wisconsin because Republican tax policies favor the wealthy while adding to our debt and shifting more of the burden onto working families and seniors,” added Sen. Shilling. “We can’t continue to sit around and watch as our middle class shrinks. Democrats are fighting to restore tax fairness, promote economic opportunities and strengthen communities.”

Despite Republican majorities in the Senate, Assembly and Governor’s office, Republican infighting has derailed budget talks for the past several weeks. The budget-writing Joint Finance Committee hasn’t met publicly since June 15th. Their failure to complete a budget by the state’s July 1st budget deadline has created more uncertainty for Wisconsin schools, families and communities.