

Guv's \$100-per-child rebate, sales tax holiday heads to the Senate

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The Assembly signed off on a proposed sales tax holiday and \$100-per-child tax rebate, sending it to the Senate where it faces an uncertain future.

The provision cleared the chamber on a [61-35 vote](#) with a number of new amendments: one that would let small retailers [opt out of the holiday](#) and three others that would make changes to the bill's language, including a requirement that a parent receiving the rebate must be a U.S. citizen. All passed on separate voice votes.

The bill, though, did not include a provision to cut the state's income tax rate, as Rep. Dale Kooyenga, R-Brookfield, floated last week. Speaker Robin Vos yesterday indicated to reporters he wasn't certain whether the amendment would get a vote today.

Meanwhile, Dems and Republicans went head-to-head over the bill on the floor, with Dems, including Rep. Melissa Sargent, arguing the plan stems from GOP fears about the upcoming fall general election and the hope the legislation will help Republicans "buy votes instead of earn them" at the polls instead of using it to invest in roads, infrastructure and education.

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"This is a last-ditch effort to buy the votes of Wisconsin citizens for the low, low bargaining price of \$100 apiece in the upcoming election this November," the Madison Dem said.

But Republicans countered the move was a way to give the \$385.2 million projected budget surplus back to the taxpayers, while Rep. Joe Sanfelippo knocked Dems, noting the plan may seem "abnormal to some on the left who every time they have

an extra penny want to spend a nickel.”

“This isn’t some election year scheme, it’s been done in the past,” the New Berlin Republican said. “We’re not creating any new ground here.”

Under the bill, the sales tax holiday is slotted for the first weekend of August this year only. The holiday, which would apply to most items of \$100 or less; would carry a price tag of \$51.5 million in 2018-19, according to the Legislative Fiscal Bureau.

Meanwhile, the child tax rebate portion of the plan carries an estimated cost of \$122.1 million for the credit and \$823,200 in administrative expenses. The checks would go out to parents in July.

Walker originally proposed the per-child credit this year and then making it a income tax deduction going forward. But he reached a deal with the Assembly earlier this month to couple the \$100 per-child credit this year with a one-time sales tax holiday.

But it’s unclear whether there’ll be enough support in the Senate GOP caucus to approve of the sales tax holiday addition to the proposal.

Speaker Robin Vos, speaking with reporters prior to today’s floor session, said the chamber has “a deal with Gov. Walker,” adding that’s what he’s been “focusing on.”

Asked by a reporter if the Rochester Republican’s message to the Senate is “take it or leave it,” Vos replied: “Yes.”

A spokesman for Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, did not immediately return a request for comment.

With today expected to be the Assembly’s last floor session of the year, the Senate could either accept the version with the sales tax holiday and send it onto the gov, or it could amend the bill and then send it back to the Assembly to see if that chamber would return to take up that version. If the Assembly refused to come back, the bill could die.

Milwaukee Dem Reps. Jason Fields and Leon Young supported the bill, while GOP Reps. Adam Jarchow and Treig Pronschinske voted against the bill.