

One Wisconsin Now: Eliminating state treasurer could undermine school improvement funds

Posted on Thursday, Mar 29, 2018

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MEDIA CONTACT

Mike Browne, Deputy Director
mike@OneWisconsinNow.org
(608) 444-3483

Independently Elected Office Oversees School Trust Funds, Protecting Them From Budget Shenanigans

MADISON, Wis. — Wisconsin Republicans are attempting to eliminate the independently elected Office of the State Treasurer, a move that could undermine the operation of funds that helps school libraries and provides favorable loans to school districts to finance improvements.

One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Scot Ross commented, “Eliminating the independent State Treasurer wouldn’t just mean Wisconsin would lose its fiscal watchdog, it will also have unintended consequences, like undermining the integrity of state funds that were created to help schools and libraries.”

The Office of the State Treasurer was created by the Wisconsin State Constitution and among the duties of the office are helping to oversee the school trust funds. Because the Treasurer is not involved in the state budget process run by the Governor and the Legislature, it serves as the ideal custodian to protect the integrity of the funds.

In recent years, Gov. Scott Walker and Republicans in control of the state legislature

have sought to weaken the office and transfer its functions to state agencies overseen by political appointees. But they have upped the ante this year, putting a measure on the April 3 election ballot that would, if approved by voters, entirely eliminate the Treasurer's office by amending the Wisconsin Constitution.

Ross concluded, "Eliminating our fiscal watchdog is risky and transferring duties to personnel appointed by, or overseen by, the governor's office creates a disconcerting consolidation of power that has the potential to lead to abuse and corruption."