Rep. Anderson: Republicans lower Walmart's property taxes, raise yours

Posted on Tuesday, Feb 13, 2018

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Local governments and taxpayers will continue to pay for tax loophole

MADISON – Today, Assembly Republicans voted against closing the 'Dark Store' loophole. Based on a Supreme Court decision in 2008, big box retailers are allowed to base their tax assessments on their value as a vacant store rather than a store in operation. This so-called 'Dark Store' loophole saves corporate retailers millions of dollars and shifts the burden of those savings to homeowners and other businesses.

"I am disappointed, but not at all surprised that Assembly Republicans sided with big box retailers over their local governments today. Walmart and WMC have been lobbying the legislature for months" said Rep. Anderson. "Any way you look at it, leaving this loophole open shifts the tax burden away from huge retailers and onto local property taxpayers."

"Speaker Vos threw a fit on the floor because we tried to hold a vote on a bill that has 28 Republican co-sponsors in the Assembly. It has 22 Democratic co-sponsors. The platonic ideal of bi-partisanship! This bi-partisan piece of legislation was supported by local governments and local elected officials all across Wisconsin."

To cite just a few examples of retailers using the dark store loophole to avoid paying taxes:

· Using the Dark Store Loophole, Menards reduced the value of its property in Fond du Lac, from $9.2 million to $5.2 million.

· A CVS property in Appleton reduced the value of its property from $4.4 million to $1.8 million. Local taxpayers are now on the hook for a $350,000 refund.

"We can get this done before the legislative session ends. We simply need the political will from the Republican leaders in the state capitol to make it happen," Rep. Anderson concluded.