

# Representative Spreitzer: Votes to close 'dark store' loophole

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MADISON – Today, Assembly Republicans voted against closing the 'Dark Store' loophole, legislation State Representative Mark Spreitzer co-sponsored and voted in favor of on the Assembly floor. Due to 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 legal loophole is used by large corporations and their attorneys to dramatically reduce the amount they owe on their property tax bill, shifting the tax burden to homeowners and small businesses.

“By rejecting this bill, Assembly Republicans gave in to special interests who see no problem with higher property taxes on homeowners in favor of tax breaks for big corporations,” said Representative Spreitzer. “With big corporations paying less than they should, homeowners and small businesses will have to pick up the slack, paying more than their fair share.”

Despite having a majority of the Assembly as co-sponsors, Republicans voted against taking up AB 386, the Dark Store bill, on the Assembly floor. The bill has 61 co-sponsors, 31 Republicans and 30 Democrats—more than enough to pass the bill and fix the loophole. All Assembly Republicans voted against taking up the bill. This bi-partisan legislation also has support from local governments and local elected officials from across the state.

Examples of retailers using the dark store loophole to avoid paying taxes include:

Menards reducing the value of its property in Fond du Lac from \$9.2 million to \$5.2 million.

A CVS property in Appleton reducing 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.

“I’m proud to have voted to protect taxpayers and close this loophole today,” said Representative Spreitzer. “Until Assembly Republicans change course, this loophole will continue to exist and place an unnecessary burden on Wisconsinites.”