

Reps. Katsma and Goyke: State Assembly Passes Sheriff Sale Fairness Legislation

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Wisconsin counties will have important tools to target bad actors and increase auction sale competition

MADISON- Today the Wisconsin State Assembly passed bi-partisan legislation authored by Rep. Terry Katsma (R-Oostburg) and Rep. Evan Goyke (D-Milwaukee) that makes common sense changes to Wisconsin's sheriff sale process.

The legislation follows on reporting by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel titled Landlord Games, which uncovered a small number of delinquent landlords who acquire new rental properties at sheriff auctions and turn a profit by manipulating loopholes in the system, while the properties linger perpetually in poor condition holding down property values and adding to neighborhood instability.

- Assembly Bill 690 enables counties to host (or contract with a licensed Wisconsin auctioneer) sales of foreclosed properties via an Internet-based auction making the process more accessible and transparent for bidders and investors in the neighborhoods that need them most.
- Assembly Bill 691 prohibits a buyer from acquiring a new property at a sheriff sale if the buyer is already more than 120 days delinquent on property taxes or building code judgments.

At the conclusion of today's floor session Rep. Katsma stated, "These two

fundamental improvements to the system will benefit not only Milwaukee but all Wisconsin communities. It is critical to maintain and expand an open, unobstructed market for these homes. I think these bills will burden only the bad actors—without creating cumbersome new regulations or requirements for the vast majority of property owners and well-intentioned bidders. I thank my colleagues for supporting the legislation.”

In December of 2016, Rep. Goyke invited Rep. Katsma to his home in Milwaukee and both legislators attended a sheriff sale of foreclosed Milwaukee properties.

“I thank Rep. Katsma for coming to Milwaukee and spending a day with me in my community. We stood in the same room with people who already own hundreds of rental properties, on which they owe tens of thousands of dollars in taxes and fines, and watched as the government awarded them winning bids for new properties,” Rep. Goyke commented following today’s passage of the legislation.

“These bills will help stabilize neighborhoods, reduce crime, and increase property values in neighborhoods throughout the state that need it the most.”

The legislation now heads to the State Senate for consideration and passage.