

Republicans approve revised child tax credit with Dem vote

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The state Senate today signed off on a \$100 per-child credit and a scaled back sales tax holiday as part of a deal GOP legislative leaders struck to move the stalled proposal.

It only cleared the Senate because Sen. La Tonya Johnson, D-Milwaukee, joined most Republicans in backing the plan.

The initial roll call finished 16-14 with Republicans Rob Cowles, of Green Bay, and Luther Olsen, of Ripon, voting against the plan. Sens. Alberta Darling, R-River Hills, and Jon Erpenbach, D-Middleton, were out of the chamber for the vote, and Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, sought to send the bill to the Assembly.

Dems tried to object so the votes of Darling and Erpenbach could be added. With one vacancy, no votes from both of them would have sunk the bill. But Senate President Roger Roth, R-Appleton, ruled the roll was closed and could not be amended.

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When Erpenbach returned, he indicated he would have opposed the bill, while Darling said she would have supported it. Even if both votes were counted, it still would have cleared the Senate thanks to Johnson's vote. The chamber is controlled 18-14 by Republicans with one vacancy.

The Assembly originally called for a sales tax holiday that would apply to most purchases of \$100 or less. But the Senate balked at the more than \$50 million price tag.

The Senate version instead would save taxpayers about \$12 million the first

weekend of August, according to Fitzgerald.

It would exempt from the sales tax:

- *clothing purchases of up to \$75 on any single item;
- *computer purchases for personal use of up to \$750;
- *school computer supplies for personal use of no more than \$250;
- *school supplies of up to \$75 per item.

Under the bill, Wisconsin families with children under the age of 18 on Dec. 31 would have to apply for the credit of \$100 per child by June 30.