

Richard Chandler: Sales tax holiday and child sales tax rebate continue efforts to reduce Wisconsin's tax burden

Posted on Wednesday, Aug 8, 2018

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It has been a busy spring and summer at the Wisconsin Department of Revenue.

From May 15 to July 2, families with dependent children could claim a \$100 per child rebate for sales taxes paid on purchases made for their children in 2017. More than \$85 million was returned to parents, guardians, grandparents and others with dependent children under age 18 on December 31, 2017.

Families with children and all Wisconsinites had an opportunity to save more money on taxes during the first ever sales tax holiday in Wisconsin, which began August 1 and ran through August 5. During this time, state and local sales tax was not charged on school supplies where each item was \$75 or less, clothing where each item was \$75 or less, computers where each item was \$750 or less and computer supplies where each item was \$250 or less. Many other items were also included in the sales tax holiday.

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Both the Wisconsin Child Sales Tax Rebate and the sales tax holiday are the result of a state budget surplus of almost \$400 million at the end of the last state fiscal year, a surplus that resulted from a strong economy and sound fiscal management. That allowed the state to continue its efforts to return money to Wisconsin

taxpayers.

Governor Walker has made reducing taxes a top priority, and we've made a lot of progress. Wisconsin's tax climate is the best it's been in more than 50 years. Wisconsin's state-local tax burden is now 0.3% below the national average. Our tax rank among the 50 states was 21st in 2015, down from 9th in 2010.

Since 2010, we've cut income tax rates for middle class taxpayers, increased income tax deductions used by middle class families to offset the costs of health care, child care and education, and reduced the property tax burden for a median value home, among many other tax reduction initiatives.

We want Wisconsin residents to keep more of their hard-earned money in their pockets. The Child Sales Tax Rebate and the sales tax holiday continue our ongoing efforts to reduce taxes on Wisconsin citizens, and we'll look for more opportunities to make progress in the future.

— *Chandler is secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Revenue.*