

# Sarah Lloyd: Vote no and keep the state treasurer

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There is an important question on the April 3rd ballot regarding our State Treasurer. I urge you to join me and vote NO on this ballot initiative. Now is not the time for Wisconsin citizens to be getting rid of critical watchdogs in our system. The Office of State Treasurer is in place to serve the important function of overseeing State assets, including the Common School Fund, the University Fund, and the State Trust Fund Loan Program, along with oversight on Wisconsin's Board of Commissioners of Public Lands.

These funds impact the State's bond rating and ability to finance projects and protect pensions. These assets and lands that the State Treasurer oversees have an impact in all 72 counties of the state. The strength of the Funds and security of assets allows the state to help towns, villages, cities, counties, and school districts finance infrastructure for economic development in all our communities. As a rural resident, who travels often on state, county, and town roads, I see almost every day a clear example of crumbling infrastructure that needs our attention.

As a Wisconsinite I also am interested in the preservation of the actual assets of these public lands that we all hold in common. These lands, primarily located in northern part of the state, are important wildlife habitat and ecologically important forested areas. For me this is another reason that we need a strong watchdog in the State Treasurers Office.

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Critics of the State Treasurer will say that the office has little power and we should

get rid of it to save money. It is true that many of the core functions of the office have been stripped away and put in to the Department of Administration in recent years. However, this is not a reason to get rid of the State Treasurer, in fact this is a reason to maintain the office and work to restore the power of the office. Too much of the power over state assets is now consolidated in the Executive Branch, in the Governor's Department of Administration. We do not have adequate checks and balances because of this.

On April 3rd we have the chance to send a clear message that we want more oversight of our shared assets as Wisconsinites not less. If this goes through, Wisconsin would be the only state without a State Treasurer or equivalent office. Make sure you vote No on April 3rd and protect our shared assets.

— *Lloyd is special projects coordinator for Wisconsin Farmers Union.*