

# Senate approves sparsity aid bill after rejecting Dem amendment on school safety

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Small, rural schools would get a \$6.5 million bump in state aid, while low-spending districts would be able to collect more in property taxes under legislation the Senate approved 31-1 Tuesday.

The bill, which now heads to the gov, was approved after Republicans rejected a Dem attempt to amend the legislation to allow districts to exceed revenue limits for school safety measures.

Minority Leader Jennifer Shilling, D-La Crosse, proposed the amendment, saying it was an opportunity for lawmakers to act in the wake of the mass shooting at a Florida school last week.

Shilling, whose parents and five employees were killed at the family's Palatine, Ill., restaurant during a 1993 robbery-murder, said lawmakers have to address the issue.

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"I don't want these headlines to become normal. I don't want the headlines of workplace violence and school violence to become normal and we look at our phone and we just keep swiping up," Shilling said.

Sen. Alberta Darling, R-River Hills, said she appreciated Shilling's passion on the issue and her Dem colleague was not the only one who wants to address school shootings. Still, she called the amendment unfair because some would suggest Republicans were not compassionate if they opposed it when lawmakers "need to look at this together, but not an amendment that we haven't had a chance to talk

about.”

Senate President Roger Roth, R-Appleton, ruled the amendment was not appropriately before the body because it was beyond the scope of the legislation. Republicans voted to uphold his ruling.

Sen. David Craig, R-Big Bend, was the only member to oppose the bill on final passage.