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Voters shoot down effort to eliminate state treasurer

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Voters on Tuesday overwhelmingly rejected a bid by Republicans to eliminate the state treasurer's office, which backers of the constitutional amendment argued is an unnecessary use of taxpayer dollars.

The group Save Our Fiscal Watchdog, which did an $85,000 TV buy urging voters to keep the office, called on lawmakers to restore powers to the office that have been stripped away over the years "so we can guard our taxpayers' money from any and all fiscal abuse or corruption."

"Wisconsin has a tradition of an open and transparent government, and by retaining our office of state treasurer, the people have spoken that we need a true fiscal watchdog — independent of any administration or Legislature," the group said.

The liberal Greater Wisconsin Committee's referendum arm — Make Your Vote Count — also ran a digital ad urging a vote against eliminating the state treasurer's office to fight back against "the Walker power grab."

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GOP state Treasurer Matt Adamczyk ran in 2014 on a platform of eliminating the office and pushed for the amendment as it passed the Republican-controlled state Legislature in back-to-back sessions.

Adamczyk declined to say what he thinks should happen to the office now that voters have decided they want to keep it.

But he argued things like the state's college savings and unclaimed property programs should not be returned to the office.

“It’s going to be up to future legislatures to figure out what the treasurer’s office should do because right now there’s not much there,” he said.

Adamczyk has already announced plans to run for a state Assembly seat in the Milwaukee suburbs, and he said Tuesday’s vote will not change that.