

Treasurer Godlewski, Sen. Baldwin, and Local Leaders: Push Congress to fund essential services and workers

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MADISON, Wis. – Treasurer Sarah Godlewski and local leaders joined U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin to raise awareness and call Congress to act in passing additional and flexible funding for Wisconsin and local governments on Wednesday. Treasurer Godlewski and local treasurers came together on Monday releasing a letter outlining the critical need for funding to ensure essential services remain intact in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Everyday Wisconsinites rely on essential services provided by state and local government. Whether it be teachers, EMTs, firefighters, or sanitation workers, these public employees serve essential roles in our communities,” said State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski. “I, along with local treasurers from across the state, are calling on our Congressional representatives to take action and ensure that these essential services and the workers who perform them receive the funds they need.”

Many Wisconsin communities are in dire financial positions due to the cost of unplanned and unprecedented expenses from the COVID-19 public health emergency coupled with lost revenue. The League of Municipalities has estimated local governments across Wisconsin will lose about \$400 million, and tax collections for the state are down by hundreds of millions compared to previous years.

“For months now, state and local governments have been on the frontlines of our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The House passed the HEROES Act, which includes more federal funding to our state and local governments in Wisconsin as they work to provide essential public services. Wisconsin towns, cities and counties need federal help to cover budgetary shortfalls that have resulted from this ongoing

public health crisis and economic downturn,” said U.S. Senator Baldwin. “It’s past time for Senate Majority Leader McConnell to bring up the HEROES Act in the Senate and pass it so local governments in Wisconsin have the relief they need to move forward.”

“Without a way to recoup some of these revenue losses, our county will have no way to ensure residents will continue to receive the necessary critical services they depend on,” said Casey Bradley, Adams County Manager/Administrative Coordinator.

“While Kenosha County has been growing in recent years, the events related to this emergency could have serious consequences. We have seen a decline in sales tax revenue, interest on investments and are concerned about the potentially significant increase in the amount of property taxes that may go delinquent at the end of July and how that will affect our ability to pay for increases we are seeing in the Health Department, Human Services and other areas,” said Teri Jacobson, Kenosha County Treasurer.

“This pandemic response finds an already fragile EMS system now facing new financial and operational stressors that are likely to have long-term, and potentially disastrous, impacts on our industry,” said Brian Donaldson, Director, Waushara County EMS and Vice-President, Wisconsin Emergency Medical Services Association.

Wisconsin communities are already tapping into rainy-day funds, cutting budgets, and debating furloughs and layoffs. Without action from Congress, Wisconsinites will lose access to services they rely on everyday and essential workers could lose their jobs.