

State Sen. Wirch: Statement on today's Joint Finance Committee action

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Madison – Sen. Bob Wirch (D-Somers) issued the following statement following today's Joint Finance Committee (JFC) session, in which the Republican majority removed more than 380 items from Governor Tony Evers' 2021-2023 budget proposal:

“Republicans are using the line that most of these are ‘non-fiscal policy items’ that don’t belong in the state budget. Generally, I’d agree that we should limit the amount of non-fiscal policy that goes into the budget. However, this is an extraordinary circumstance. A number of the removed proposals – Medicaid expansion, medical marijuana, raising the minimum wage, ending the ‘dark store’ loophole, repeal of the one week UI waiting period, automatic voter registration, expansion of the homestead and earned income tax credits, a fair redistricting process – have overwhelming public support and have been attempted through the usual legislative process over and over again, only to be blocked by Republicans. When you have an issue like Medicaid expansion, which public polls show as many as 70% of state voters support; supportive referendums passed in cities and counties across the state by wide margins; numerous county board resolutions asking the state to implement, and legislation year after year doesn’t get so much as a public hearing – the budget is the only other way. If Republican leadership won’t allow these policy proposals as part of the budget process, then they should stop their total obstructionism when it comes to standalone legislation.”