

Rep. Allen: AB 245 fails our counties

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Today, State Representative Scott Allen (R-Waukesha) released the following statement following the passage of AB 245:

“Counties have the important task of executing state mandated services at the local level. In many respects, they function as local offices of the state.

“Services such as child welfare, youth justice, services for the aged and disabled, public health, mental health, jail operation, sheriff’s office, circuit courts, autopsies, road maintenance, landfill and recycling programs, vital records, property tax collection, election administration are largely dictated by the state. The cost of providing these services is directly tied to the population size of a county. A larger county requires more social workers, more judges, and more clerks.

“Since 1911, the state has collected taxes and returned a portion of them to the counties to ensure that state mandated services are provided. It makes sense then that shared revenue would be distributed based on the need driven by population.

“Sadly, the current system does not do that nor does AB 245. Shared revenue is a broken formula, and the bill that passed today does not address this fundamental inequality for counties.

“Waukesha County is the 3rd largest county in the state and under this bill receives the lowest aid per capita of all the counties in the state. The City of Waukesha, the 7th largest city in the state, has, under this bill, over 30 other municipalities receiving greater shared revenue. While the additional revenue will help, the extra funding to be provided to the City and County of Waukesha is small in comparison to the needs of the community.

“This is a broken system that desperately needs to be fixed. We have the opportunity to address it, and we ought to address it.

“A bill of this magnitude needed more work, and so I voted no.”