

# Rep. Conley: Statement on Assembly budget passage

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MADISON - Today, the Wisconsin State Assembly met in regular session to take up the biennial state budget.

Following passage in both the Senate and Assembly, the budget bill will now go to Governor Evers' desk.

Representative Sue Conley (D-Janesville) issued the following statement:

"I think we can all agree that budgets are really about policy priorities. This budget has several funding provisions that invest in our shared priorities - things on which we agree. Several investments made by Governor Evers are included and in a few cases, expanded in this bill. There will be an increase in the number of district attorneys, and an increase in the minimum pay rate and the removal of a maximum pay raise cap for district attorneys. \$125 million has been allocated to fight PFAS pollution in our water, although it remains unspecified how exactly the money will be spent. All communities will see an increase in shared revenue. And the bipartisan affordable housing package the legislature passed will be funded with a \$525 million allocation.

However, there are hundreds more of Governor Evers' investments that were stripped from this bill. Continuing to fund Child Care Counts, which would help workers join or stay in the workforce and stop the growth of childcare deserts across our state-cut. Increasing access to healthcare for 89,000 more Wisconsinites through Medicaid expansion-cut. We could save more than a billion dollars by expanding Medicaid, but we remain one of only 10 states that continues to leave folks behind and federal money on the table.

This bill also cuts equity from our communities and the University of Wisconsin system. I've said it before, and I'll say it again-we continue to use the same antiquated, 30 year-old shared revenue formula as the base for the new allotments to municipalities. The inequities of the old system are baked into the new shared revenue increases, which only widens the equity gap between communities. The haphazard, illogical cuts to the UW System will have lasting effects on the people of our state and others who will now choose to go elsewhere to study, to live, to start businesses, and to raise families. Why wouldn't we want to support higher education in our state?

The tax cuts proposed by Governor Evers provided a 10% tax cut for middle income families, providing real tax relief for those who need it most. The tax cut Republicans included in this bill gives little relief to the workers of Wisconsin and the most to the wealthiest. \$20 million of that cut will benefit just 11 individuals.

It seems that some of my Assembly colleagues believe that providing equity means they will get less – that something will be taken away from them. I believe that cutting equity opportunities from our lives breeds fear and hostility; providing equity opportunities lifts us all up in spirit, in community and in compassion. This bill could use a lot more of those values. For these reasons, I voted no on today's budget bill."