

# Romaine Quinn: Evers makes a bad situation worse

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Imagine waking up one day and having your property taxes more than double because 85% of your neighbors have no obligation to pay. The snow plowing, the paving, the ditch mowing... that's now all on the 15% of you that are left. On top of that, the neighbors that don't pay also control your town board, so taxation without representation is now back in style.

But it doesn't stop there.

Some of these neighbors also want you to go back and pay their tax bills for the prior five years. Since you're footing so many other bills, you might not have the cash on hand. But they say don't sweat it! They're just going to go get a loan in your name to pay themselves. And if that wasn't enough, these same neighbors now want to test the legal boundaries and are working on developing a brand new tax, which they don't even have the authority to impose. So your property taxes have doubled but that apparently wasn't enough.

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And to make things worse, the state government has decided that if you hand over even 1% of your property to these tax-exempt neighbors, you no longer have to pay property taxes at all! You can join the 85%! Who wouldn't want to take this bargain? Soon the 15% of remaining taxpayers will become 14%, then 13%, then 12%, and the death spiral will grow as the remaining taxpayers see even bigger hikes.

But in the midst of this crisis, you saw a glimmer of hope. Your newly elected state legislators inserted a provision into the state budget that will provide at least some

minimal constraints on what your neighbors are doing to you. Unfortunately, last week, those hopes were dashed, as Governor Evers vetoed out this protective language. When asked why, the Governor explained that it's because he cares about you, and that he believes your neighbors do too, and that's why those 85% should continue down this path since they obviously have your best interests at heart.

As time drags on, and you deplete your savings in an attempt to hold onto the home that you've worked for all your life, you start contemplating simply walking away. You could try to sell your home, but if you can't afford your taxes, neither can any prospective buyer. Instead of enjoying your years of retirement here, or instead of raising your family here, you've been thrown into a financial horror movie that everyone seems willing to watch but no one seems willing to solve.

You might have guessed by now: this scenario is not fictional. It is happening in Ashland County. It is happening to the people I was elected to represent. Just because it is a small town 300 miles from the Capitol building does not make it any less urgent to solve. I believe everyone in the state needs to know what is going on. If this were happening in Milwaukee or Madison I have no doubt it would have been solved by now, with the Governor proudly taking credit. Instead he is providing zero leadership. My constituents know it, and you should too.

*-Quinn, R-Cameron, represents the 25th Senate District.*