

Sen. Felzkowski: Looks to revamp shared revenue

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Madison, WI - On Tuesday, Senator Mary Felzkowski (R-Tomahawk) and Representative Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc) introduced legislation that would revitalize communities through an overhaul of the old, broken shared revenue formula.

Felzkowski commented: “We’ve held our communities frozen since 2004, requiring them to cut fat in their budgets and find efficiencies. Many have fulfilled that request, and are now at the point where they cannot cut anymore – because there’s simply nothing left to remove.”

This bill would close the gap between the winners and losers that currently exist in the old shared revenue formula, while ensuring that every community receives a significant inflationary increase. The bill would also have a maintenance of effort (MOE) on our state’s larger communities to ensure that they’re providing adequate public safety services, and not defunding our police.

“Throughout our negotiations, we’ve worked hard to set parameters that would require this new money to go towards necessary services like police, fire, EMS, and roads.”

Along with the increase in shared revenue, the bill would give Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee tools to fix their pension problems through an increased sales tax – not on the backs of Wisconsin taxpayers. The revenues from these sales tax increases would go towards paying off their unfunded pension liabilities and meeting strict law enforcement and firefighter maintenance of efforts – which would set minimum staffing levels for the two departments.

“Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee have made some poor financial

decisions regarding their pension over the last few decades, and it's resulted in a fiscal cliff that's about to drop out from under them. While I appreciate the newly elected leadership for stepping up and having these tough conversations, I fully expect them to use the tools in this bill to solve these pension issues on their own – without state taxpayer funding.”

In exchange for the ability to raise the sales tax rate in Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee, the bill includes many policy changes for both communities.

Despite the introduction of this bill, the Senate and Assembly still have a number of issues to iron out before this legislation will be ready to cross the finish line.