

Sen. Nass: Milwaukee Bailout Bill (AB 245)

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Senator Steve Nass (R-Whitewater) issued the following statement regarding the rapidly advancing Milwaukee Bailout Bill that also includes new money for the Shared Revenue Program:

“There are serious issues with both the process used to develop this bill behind closed doors and the actual language of the bill only released publicly on Tuesday, May 2, 2023. Most legislators and the public were not aware of the actual details of the closed door meetings among special interests and a small number of legislators to stitch together this Frankenstein Bill with many unrelated parts.

I support increasing funds to the Shared Revenue Program and doing so with a new distributional formula that fairly sends the dollars out to all regions of Wisconsin. The reform of Shared Revenue can be met without linkage to a massive bailout of the fiscal incompetence by elected officials in the City and County of Milwaukee for many years.

I also support fixing the Milwaukee problem with serious and binding long-term controls on how Milwaukee spends every dollar they receive from the state or local taxpayers. Such a reform package must prevent the need for another bailout in the near future. AB 245 might address the pension crisis in Milwaukee, but it has only a few binding controls on how the city and county spend money going forward.

Republicans in this state have long opposed the creation of new local option sales taxes simply to feed the desire of more spending. Wisconsin still ranks too high in both incomes taxes and property taxes nationally, but relatively low in the use of sales taxes. By authorizing new local option sales taxes for Milwaukee, we will have blindly kicked open the door to greater use of local option sales taxes for other

communities in short order.

If the regressive fiscal policy of creating new sales taxes for Milwaukee advances, it must be approved by a binding referendum vote of the local taxpayers.”