

Sen. Smith: Reacts to Republican property tax increase

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MADISON- Today on the Senate floor, Republican members voted for a \$647 million property tax hike, in direct contradiction of their purported commitment to reducing the tax burden on hardworking Wisconsinites.

Senator Jeff Smith (D-Brunswick) released the following statement on the passage of Senate Bill 330:

“With \$6.9 billion in surplus, Republicans still decided to raise property taxes. And it gets worse – after starving our schools for years, they now want to punish public school districts by denying them funding in the wake of a failed property tax referendum.

“School districts don’t go to referendum for fun. They have been picking up the pieces left behind after a decade of underfunding, cuts, punitive mandates and harebrained, fringe education policy changes. For years I’ve heard from my colleagues across the aisle that if schools don’t feel that they have enough funding, they can go to referendum. Now they are penalizing school districts for doing exactly that.

“While Republicans funnel money to their special interest voucher school buddies, they come back to taxpayers to ask for money to replace the funds they have withheld from our public schools for years. This is a con job, and the people who will end up suffering are our students and our schools, especially our rural schools.

“I am saddened and disappointed but not surprised by the majority’s insistence on passing this reprehensible legislation. In the entire Chippewa Valley delegation, Representative Jodi Emerson (D-Eau Claire) and I have been the only legislators to

stand up time and again to the gutting of our public school districts. I was proud to vote in favor of amendments to mitigate the havoc Republicans have wreaked on our public education system.”