

Senate Republicans vote to overturn Evers budget vetoes on school spending, tax cut

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The GOP supermajority in the state Senate voted today to overturn Dem Gov. Tony Evers' budget veto that set up annual increases in per-pupil spending over the next 400 years and another that struck down a reduction in the state's third-highest tax bracket.

The move sends the matters to the Assembly, which is two votes shy of the two-thirds majority in that chamber to complete the override of the gov's vetoes and restore the provisions. Still, if any of the chamber's 34 Dems are absent during a floor period, it would lower the threshold to override the vetoes.

The Legislature hasn't overridden a gubernatorial veto since 1985.

Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu, R-Oostburg, knocked Evers' move to extend annual per-pupil spending increases by \$325 a year over the next four centuries. The gov struck punctuation and numbers from the budget language to extend the annual increase to 2425.

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To put 400 years into perspective, LeMahieu noted the Plymouth colony in 1623 was celebrating just its second Thanksgiving and Newton had yet to discover gravity.

LeMahieu said the "tax cut veto was even more ridiculous" because it impacted those who qualify for food stamps.

The budget provision would've taken the third-highest bracket to 4.4 percent from 5.3 percent.

Under current law, that bracket for tax year 2023 applies to income between \$36,840 to \$405,550 for married joint filers and \$27,630 to \$304,170 single filers.

Sen. Lena Taylor, D-Milwaukee, countered for those at the lowest end of the third tax bracket, the GOP cut amounts to about \$13 a year. Meanwhile, she said, Republicans are trying to shut off a guaranteed annual increase in schools.

“Although every dollar matters to individuals, investing in education and our children is always a winner,” she said.

The Assembly this week voted along party lines to pair the reduction in the third-highest tax cut with an expanded tax break for retirement income.

Today’s Senate calendar also included an override vote on the gov’s move to nix a reduction in the highest tax bracket, which applies to income above that captured by the third. But Republicans tabled that vote.

The Senate also voted 22-11 to overturn Evers’ veto of SB 49, which sought to prohibit state agencies and local units of government from restricting the connection or reconnection of a utility service based on the type of energy provided. The bill was introduced amid various proposals to restrict or ban gas stoves.