

Rep. Snodgrass: Assembly Democratic Caucus, led by Representatives Phelps and Cruz release bill to utilize state budget surplus to address school funding, freeze property taxes

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MADISON, WI – On March 14, led by State Representative Christian Phelps (D-Eau Claire), Representative Angelina Cruz (D-Racine), and members of the Assembly Democratic Caucus, including Representative Lee Snodgrass (D-Appleton), introduced a proposal to use \$1.3 billion of the state's surplus to freeze property taxes and increase state funding for public schools.

State Representative Lee Snodgrass (D-Appleton) released the following statement:

“Speaker Vos and his caucus may have decided we are done working for the year but Assembly Democrats know we need action not adjournment. Across the board, Wisconsinites have been asking for more funding for our schools and action to lower property taxes. Democrats have rolled up our sleeves and have a plan to help schools, families and communities.”

“Our solution is simple: pick up the tab for constitutionally-mandated public school services, and meaningfully keep down local property taxes without further shortchanging our communities. When the state pays its fair share, property taxes stay down. It's really that simple. Our proposal increases general school aid paid by the state, using just some of the surplus funds at our disposal. By doing so, we

project the state can deliver serious relief to property taxpayers who have been footing the bill left to them by years of Republican controlled budgets.

“Additionally, this proposal addresses a familiar and persistent strain on public school districts’ tight budgets: the low reimbursement rate for special education services. While Legislative Republicans passed a budget claiming they would reimburse 42% of special education costs in public schools this year and 45% next year, they budgeted insufficiently and are expected to fall some 7% short of their promise. This bill uses existing surplus funds to increase reimbursement rates to 60%, allocates enough money to meet that commitment, and would significantly reduce the need for operating referendums across Wisconsin.

“We know this proposal will have bipartisan support in our neighborhoods as families seek solutions to constant referendums and public schools struggling to do more with less. Courage to pass meaningful solutions that invest in schools and address property taxes instead of giveaways and gimmicks is what the people of Wisconsin are calling for.

“I remain hopeful that Legislative Republicans and Governor Evers are ready to listen to public education professionals, parents, and local taxpayers, and pass our bill.”