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For Immediate Release

Contact: (608) 266-7511
State Senator Kathy Bernier

A Budget for You, the Taxpayer

(Madison)...Today the Joint Committee on Finance wrapped up its work on Wisconsin's next two-year budget, recommending its passage by the full Legislature as soon as possible. **The budget cuts taxes by \$3.4 billion, fully funds our state's 2/3 funding commitment to schools and federal spending benchmarks, provides historic rate increases to Medicaid and long-term care, and prioritizes the needs of the 23rd Senate District.**

"When my colleagues and I on the Joint Committee on Finance began the budget process in January, we knew we could end with a budget that funds education, healthcare, and transportation while still cutting taxes," said Senator Bernier (R-Chippewa Falls). "We set that goal for you, the taxpayer, and we achieved it."

"Included in the budget is a \$15 million grant to expand psychiatric and mental health beds in Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire – a top priority of mine for years," continued Sen. Bernier. "We also gave a 12% funding increase to nursing homes, a 40% rate increase to dentists serving low-income individuals and families, tens of millions in increased funding for direct care and personal care workers, a massive investment in child care, and \$100 million for local road improvements over and above a 2% increase to general transportation aid each year."

"When it comes to the classroom, this budget is a winner," Sen. Bernier added. "Between federal funding and increased state aid, the schools in my district are guaranteed an average per-pupil increase of at least \$2,120. This is in addition to a \$128 million increase for special education, mental health, and other categorical aids. And this budget meets the maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement set forth by the federal government in order to secure \$1.5 billion in new federal funding."

"And finally, we are providing permanent tax relief for the middle class, main street employers, everyday workers, and service members to the tune of \$3.4 billion," concluded Sen. Bernier. "The typical Wisconsin family will see \$1,200 in savings (\$900 in income taxes, \$300 in property taxes) through this unprecedented plan. When it comes before the full Legislature, I will be proud to join my colleagues in voting 'yes' and sending it to the Governor's desk without delay."

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The budget as recommended by the Joint Committee on Finance closes Wisconsin's GAAP deficit to nearly zero, grows the rainy day fund to over \$2 billion, limits general fund spending growth to less than 2% each year, lowers property taxes on the Median Value Home, cuts more than 100 vacant positions, and keeps the structural deficit low.