



June 11, 2009

Wisconsin State Assembly

Dear Member of the Wisconsin State Assembly,

I am writing to urge your support of Rep. Bill Kramer's Amendment to the proposed budget, Assembly Bill 75, to require legislative oversight of funds expended. As Wisconsin has carelessly overspent \$6.6 billion in taxpayers' money this year, oversight of the state agencies that contribute to this overspending problem is a necessary step to rectifying the staggering state of Wisconsin's economy. While the plethora of taxes and spending that compose the budget are unconscionable, an amendment increasing transparency in the state's finances is a critical step towards a more fiscally responsible Wisconsin.

The amendment requires each agency to submit to the joint legislative audit committee a report on its fiscal health for the fiscal year. The report would include all agency expenditures exceeding \$100, the numbers of employees of that agency, aggregated payroll data and a list, explanation and identification of the statutory provision for each program administered by that agency. While the ultimate goal should be to disclose all expenditure information to taxpayers, this amendment provides the first important step towards making Wisconsin state government more accountable.

It is inexcusable that the current budget thrusts a \$2.1 billion tax burden on Wisconsin taxpayers, made more egregious by the lack of oversight in the budget process and administration of state governmental agencies.

As representatives, you are stewards of your constituents' tax dollars, and as such cannot responsibly allocate these monies without a clear and comprehensive understanding of state agencies' efficacy. Rep. Kramer's amendment provides for an annual evaluation of the financial benefit and efficiency of state agencies, all of which are funded by Wisconsinites who are already struggling under the onerous burden of the \$1.2 billion tax hike rushed through the legislature in February.

While Wisconsinites shoulder one of the highest tax burdens in the country, they are also lagging farthest behind in transparency. Since 2007, more than 25 states have taken action to provide taxpayers with information on state finances, while no efforts have been successful in the Badger State. As Wisconsinites are forced to pay for more and more irresponsible government spending, there is little excuse for such overwhelming opacity in their state's finances. Rep. Kramer's amendment to the budget addresses the need for transparency in the state spending, and is a good first step to expanding Wisconsin taxpayers' power as true fiscal watchdogs of their state.

Thus, I ask you to vote "YES" on Rep. Kramer's amendment to Assembly Bill 75 and urge you to reconsider the indefensible tax burden encompassed in the state budget before passing it as a whole.

Onward,

Grover Norquist
President
Americans for Tax Reform

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