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For Immediate Release

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Carpenter Announces Intent to Vote To Override Governor's Veto Re Property Tax Freeze.

Madison — Citing his continuing fight for overburdened residential property taxpayers, State Senator Tim Carpenter (D - Milwaukee) today stated his support for the property tax freeze vetoed out of the budget bill. “To protect residential property taxpayers, I will have no choice but to vote to override the governor’s veto of the property tax freeze,” said Carpenter, “unless before the vote the governor comes up with a plan that could pass the legislature that would *lower* residential property taxes.” Carpenter’s announcement is a continuation of his long fight to reduce residential property taxes. Earlier this year, Tim Carpenter tried to lower residential property taxes by way of amendments to the budget, and even through a constitutional amendment.

Property Tax Freeze in Imperfect, But A First Step For Residential Property Tax Relief

Carpenter stated that after hundreds of door-to-door visits with his constituents this past week, he has confirmed that the voters understand the imperfect nature of the budget bill’s property tax freeze, but support it regardless. “The mantra of ‘no new taxes’ in Madison is now understood by folks in Milwaukee and Greenfield to mean ‘more local property taxes,’” Carpenter stated. Carpenter noted that the budget bill’s property tax “freeze” is not really a freeze, as property taxes will probably still go up due to increased assessments, and local governmental fees will likely be raised. “However, the property tax freeze provides reassurance that property taxpayers will not unreasonably bear the burden of Wisconsin state government’s retreat from its commitments to fund necessary governmental services.”

Residential Property Taxes Must Be Lowered.

The real tax problem in Wisconsin is the outrageous residential property taxes. The rate of increase of property taxes may be slowed somewhat by the property tax freeze, but what really needs to be done is to *lower* the regressive residential property taxes,” Carpenter stated. “These taxes are the dreadful legacy of a steady increase over the years of special interest tax exemptions given to business and agriculture, steadily increasing the burden on residential property taxpayers. Businesses that once provided almost 9.5 percent of the state's tax revenues now account for fewer than 5 percent. It is a legacy that property taxpayers continue to pay for. Year after year, tax breaks and giveaways are given to special interests, and the result is that more and more of the tax burden falls upon the residential property tax payers. This is a cruel state of affairs to visit upon seniors and others on a fixed income,” Carpenter said. “Especially when seniors on

SeniorCare are going to be socked in a few months with huge increases in fees and deductibles.”

“When times are tough, our response should *not* be to hike fees for programs like SeniorCare and to cut shared revenue, but instead we should reevaluate whether the overall tax burden isn’t being disproportionately borne by residential property taxpayers. Is it proper that those who use luxury boxes at sports stadiums pay no sales or property taxes while residential property taxes go up?” Carpenter asked. “Is it proper that the manufacturers and equipment tax exemptions total over \$10 billion dollars while those on limited or fixed incomes have to pay more each year for already high property taxes? Instead of addressing these questions, the first order of business after the budget was the passage in the GOP-controlled legislature of a \$45 million per year tax giveaway to the largest corporations.”

Carpenter Continues Fight For Lower Property Taxes By Statute And By Constitutional Amendment.

“The voters in my District have consistently identified high property taxes as one of their chief issues of concern, and for them I have fought continually for *true* property tax relief and reform. During the budget debate, I introduced amendments to sunset sales and property tax exemptions and to use all the funds so raised for residential property tax relief (Amendments Nos. 81 and 84 to Senate Bill 44.) The amendments did not pass. Further, earlier in this term, the Senate passed Senate Joint Resolution 15, which is a proposed constitutional amendment to require a two-thirds vote of the legislature in order to raise income, sales or franchise taxes,” said Carpenter. “I introduced an amendment to SJR 15 to similarly restrict raises in property taxes. The amendment did not pass. I introduced an alternative amendment to allow income, sales or franchise taxes to be raised by majority vote *only if any increase in revenue was used to lower property taxes*. The Senate’s GOP majority, on a party line vote, rejected this amendment. I find it amazing that when everyone talks about not raising taxes, residential property taxes are conveniently forgotten.

Carpenter promised that he would not give up the fight to cut the unreasonable exemptions to sales, income, and property taxes that have been given to special interests. “If successful,” Carpenter predicted, “our fight would not just freeze, but honestly lower the burden on our property taxpayers.”