

## Walker's State of the State 2015 Is Lacking

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MADISON – On Tuesday night, Governor Scott Walker had a chance to be a leader and bring our state together. Instead, he chose to give a self promoting campaign style State of the State speech that sounded more like a kickoff to a national run for President.

Like all Governors before him, Scott Walker claimed *"The state of the state is strong."* Walker clearly wants to campaign for president on his claim that he turned a \$3.6 billion budget deficit into a surplus, but the state's actual financial situation is grim.

The current budget has a \$132 million deficit and the next biennium looks even worse, with a staggering \$2.2 billion deficit that's only expected to get larger. As other states enjoy surpluses thanks to the nationwide economic recovery that has come after the Great Recession, Wisconsin is slated to be one of the few with a deficit headed into the next budget.

On the education of our next generation, Walker said *"I have a vested interest in high standards."* But in fact, public education has been public enemy number 1 for Scott Walker. In his first budget, Walker made a \$800 million cut to direct state spending on public education and mandated new limits on local school districts that left many schools scrambling just to fund their operations for the next school year. At the same time, he has funneled approximately \$124 million into unaccountable voucher schools.

Clearly wishing to launch his national aspirations as a *"tax cutter"*, Walker claimed that *"My pledge to you is that property taxes 4 years from now will be lower than they were in 2014."* But the record is different. Contrary to his tax-cutting rhetoric, Walker's first budget raised taxes on nearly 140,000 seniors and working class families to the tune of \$69.8 million, while dishing out \$610 million in tax breaks to businesses.

Scott Walker's tax policy has been fiscally irresponsible and prioritized those at the very top instead of working Wisconsin families. In an election year stunt, Walker made the rash and misguided decision to spend a projected surplus on a lopsided income tax cut that puts individuals making \$21,760 a year in the same tax bracket as those making \$239,600. As a result, the state is faced with a staggering \$2.2 billion budget deficit.



Assembly Democratic Leader **Peter Barca (D-Kenosha)** reacted to Walker's State of the State Address by saying:

*"Governor Walker had a solid ending on standing against terrorism but could have been more candid and acknowledged the unfortunate reality – that the State of our State is falling behind our neighbors on nearly every key economic issue. Wisconsin workers and middle-class families must be put first in order for our economy to thrive."*

Barca goes on *"On every major issue, Wisconsin is in a weaker position than we would expect given the national recovery and the success of our surrounding states. Because of Republican policy failures, Wisconsin faces a staggering budget deficit, lagging job and wage growth and an educational system that is clearly underfunded."*

An Audio of Rep. Barca's full response can be found [here](#) .



In reaction to Governor Walker's State of the State Address, our local leader Senator **Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay)** said in a statement issued Wednesday:

*"Preparing his presidential run, Governor Walker tried to make a case that his plan is working but while the rich keep getting richer the average family is taking a beating losing ground to their neighbors in Minnesota due to stagnating wages, struggling under the weight of skyrocketing*

*student loan debt, and finding it harder and harder to find a good paying job.*

*"Meanwhile the state is facing a \$2.2 billion deficit and a \$751 million shortfall in the transportation fund because of his irresponsible policies. And while his wealthy friends and donors get rich the middle class continues to shrink because under this administration the wealthy are allowed to take our money right out of our pockets instead of having to work for their money like everyone else.*

*"Instead of giving even more handouts to the wealthy and corporate special interests at the expense of average families we should be focusing on those policies that promote greater economic freedom and security for all Wisconsin families and that provides each person the ability and opportunity to succeed and achieve their version of the American Dream."*



Finally, State Representative **Eric Genrich (D-Green Bay)** said *"This evening, Governor Walker delivered his fifth State of the State speech outlining his goals for the upcoming year. This edition was notably light on new plans for Wisconsin and heavy on attempts to put a positive spin on the real and troubling issues facing working people in our state for a national audience."*

Genrich ends by saying *"Wisconsin deserves a new vision focused on preserving our hard working middle class roots and ensuring that the next generation has the opportunity to learn, grow, and compete on a global scale. Now is not the time for small thoughts or plans, and certainly not the time for a lack of focus. Wisconsin needs to be bold and to embrace policies that have helped neighboring states outpace us in economic growth and recovery."*

We understand that Walker is looking to the national stage for his future, but what about ours here in Wisconsin?

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