

Democrats Disappointed after Committee on Local Government Hearing

Written by Samba Baldeh Press

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We must at the very least ensure that our communities receive sustainable, long-term investments, and that local governments have the right to decide how, when, and where they direct those funds, say Dems.

MADISON - Following today's Assembly Committee on Local Government hearing on Assembly Bill (AB) 245, Democratic members of the Committee Rep. Samba Baldeh (D-Madison), Rep. Sue Conley (D-Janesville), Rep. Clinton Anderson (D-Beloit), and Rep. Melissa Ratcliff (D-Cottage Grove) released the following statement:

"At today's Committee on Local Government hearing, we heard over and over again from individuals all across the state that AB 245, the shared revenue bill, was a step in the right direction. We agree - as current and former members of local government ourselves, we know how important raising shared revenue payments will be for our communities.



"At the same time, we have many concerns about this bill in its current form. While the fiscal provisions of this bill would surely help our communities, they are neither equitable, nor nearly

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enough. We can do better for everyone. After decades of declining aid, our local governments are facing workforce challenges, structural deficits, and gaps in funding for police, fire, and EMS services. At a time when Wisconsin has the largest surplus in its history, we can and must do more to address the needs of citizens and local governments across our state.

“We also have significant concerns over the provisions of the bill that would limit local control, create unfunded mandates, and tie the hands of local governments that have been forced over the years to do so much with so little. We would also like to see more recognition of and support for the communities that have already done the difficult work of innovating and consolidating services over the years.

“Multiple times today, we were told that negotiations surrounding this bill remain ongoing. As the bill’s authors and stakeholders continue to work on this bill, we ask that they listen to the concerns of those who testified today. We ask that they seriously consider Governor Evers’ proposed historic investments in our communities. After so many years of getting shared revenue wrong, we must get it right this time. And if we are not going to fundamentally reshape the shared revenue framework with this bill, we must at the very least ensure that our communities receive sustainable, long-term investments, and that local governments have the right to decide how, when, and where they direct those funds.

“While AB 245 is indeed a step in the right direction, it is not enough. We can and must do better.”