



For Immediate Release
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Rep. Hintz Testifies in Favor of Dark Store Legislation

MADISON – Today, Rep. Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh) testified in favor of the bipartisan Dark Store legislation that he has introduced with his Republican colleagues, Rep. Rob Brooks (R-Saukville) and Sen. Duey Stroebel (R-Saukville). Rep. Hintz was joined by Oshkosh Mayor Steve Cummings and Oshkosh City Manager Mark Rohloff.

“I am very appreciative that Ways and Means Chair Macco has given this bipartisan bill the hearing it deserves, and hope it will continue through the legislative process,” said Rep. Hintz. **“Let me be clear, not taking legislative action on this issue is making a decision. If the Legislature and the Governor fail to address the Dark Store loophole, that will signal a green light for an growing number of retailers - large and small - to contest their assessments. Inaction will result in lost revenue that will increasingly be made up by increased property taxes on residential homeowners and small businesses.”**

The bills, AB 386 and AB 387, would protect Wisconsin communities against the “dark store” strategy and alternative legal loopholes used by attorneys on behalf of large retail corporations to dramatically reduce their property tax liability and push the costs on to homeowners. The city of Oshkosh has been significantly impacted by this practice. Oshkosh has already lost one dark store lawsuit on appeal in 2015 to Walgreens, when the court ordered the city to pay Walgreens \$305,680 in overcharged taxes, plus court fees and interest. Since then, two more lawsuits have been filed by Lowe’s and Menards.

“This loophole is not only problematic for municipalities because of lost property tax revenue,” Rep. Hintz said. **“Our local communities must also shoulder expense of costly legal fights against well-funded national retailers. I have never met a homeowner who thinks they need to pay more in property taxes so that a large national retailer can receive an unfair tax break. Inaction on this issue is effectively endorsing a shift in property tax burden to local homeowners.”**

The bills are endorsed by the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, Wisconsin Towns Association, Wisconsin Economic Development Association, Wisconsin Counties Association, and the Wisconsin Association of School Boards Inc.

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