

Better Choices for Wisconsin

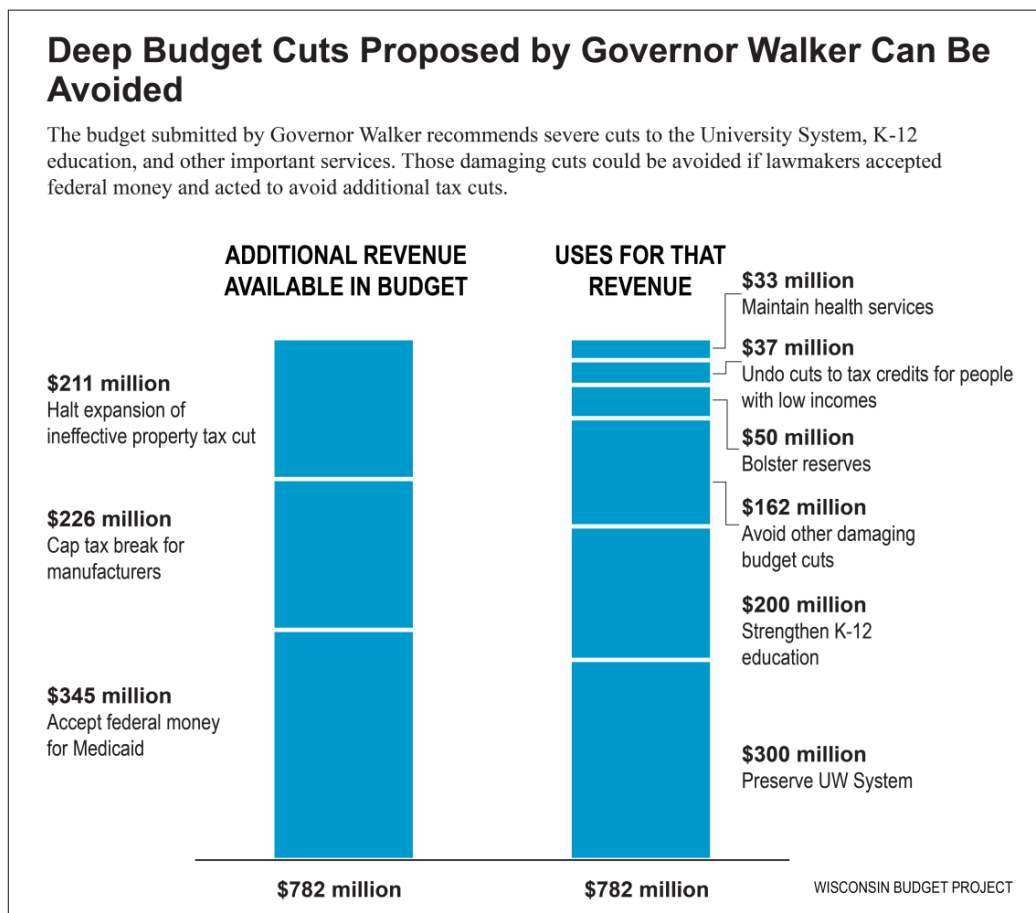
Legislators Can Avoid Deep Cuts -- Without Raising Taxes

May 4, 2015

Governor Walker's budget guts funding for the University of Wisconsin System, slashes resources for our children's education, and dismantles supports for seniors and people with disabilities. It also slashes support for the protection of natural resources and makes many other cuts that will hurt working families and undermine Wisconsin's future prosperity and quality of life.

But the *good* news is that these and other devastating cuts can be avoided – if our legislators will only make *better budget choices* for the people of Wisconsin. Three simple, common-sense actions can free up money to fill our budget holes – *without raising taxes*.

In order to create a budget that really invests in Wisconsin and its people, our lawmakers just need to stop runaway tax cuts for corporations, drop a property tax cut that does little for average Wisconsin homeowners, and accept federal money for health care. This chart from the Wisconsin Budget Project shows how:



Three changes would free up \$782 million in revenue without new taxes:

- ***Capturing federal funding for the expansion of BadgerCare – \$345 million.*** By accepting our state’s share of the funding that Wisconsinites have been contributing to the federal treasury for the expansion of Medicaid we could extend BadgerCare to more adults and save at least \$345 million in the next two-year budget period.
- ***Reallocating proposed spending for a poorly targeted property tax credit – \$211 million.*** The Governor’s increase in the school levy credit siphons funding away from other priorities and is poorly targeted. More of the credit will go to corporations, owners of large homes, and out-of-state property owners than to typical homeowners.
- ***Capping the ballooning cost of an ineffective corporate tax break at the 2014 level – \$226 million.*** The 2011-13 budget bill created a phased-in tax break that will nearly wipe out income taxes for corporations making a profit in Wisconsin – regardless of whether they are adding jobs or eliminating them.

We can invest in a prosperous future for Wisconsin with this money by:

- Restoring the \$300 million cut from the University of Wisconsin – one of our state’s main economic engines;
- Providing \$200 million more for public schools – ensuring a quality education for our children, the workers and citizens of tomorrow;
- Removing the \$33 million in cuts to health care services for seniors, people with disabilities, and very low-income adults – our friends, families, and neighbors who need our support to live dignified and productive lives;
- Using \$11 million to adjust the Homestead Tax Credit for inflation and restoring \$26 million for the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) – two of the most effective supports for fixed-income homeowners and working families;
- Increasing the projected budget balance by \$50 million – exercising fiscal responsibility by making sure we will be prepared for unexpected expenses or economic downturns; and
- Avoiding \$162 million in other harmful spending cuts that are in the Governor’s budget.

Investments like these are the building blocks of a strong economy. Healthy families, safe and stable communities, and a well-educated workforce are critical to keeping Wisconsin a place where people want to live, raise families, and do business. If we are to secure a prosperous future for our state and an economy that works for everyone, we must not make the deep and unnecessary cuts that the Governor proposed in his budget.

Our elected representatives should not miss this opportunity to make better choices that will strengthen, not weaken, Wisconsin’s assets -- our public schools, public university, health care system, our great outdoors, and the hard –working families that make our state a great place to live.

A [more thorough explanation](#) of these better choices can be found on the Wisconsin Budget Project’s website.

**A growing number of organizations have endorsed the Better Choices Budget.
See the current list on the next page.**

As of May 15, the following 29 organizations have endorsed the Better Choices Budget:

- Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools
- Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans
- Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health
- Wisconsin Community Action Program Association
- Wisconsin Council of Churches
- Wisconsin Council on Children and Families
- Wisconsin Education Association Council
- Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice
- Wisconsin Family Ties
- Wisconsin Voices
- AFSCME Wisconsin
- Board of Church & Society for the United Methodist Church in Wisconsin
- Citizen Action of Wisconsin Education Fund
- Community Advocates Public Policy Institute
- Fox Cities Advocates for Public Education
- GRandparents United for Madison Public Schools
- I Love My Public School
- Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice
- League of Women Voters of Wisconsin
- Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin
- Middleton Action Team
- Mental Health America of Wisconsin
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Wisconsin
- National Association of Social Workers, Wisconsin Chapter
- Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin
- Project \$13 – Eau Claire Area
- Save the Wisconsin Idea
- School Funding Reform for Wisconsin
- Sun Prairie Action Resource Coalition
- The Madison Institute
- West Waubesa Preservation Coalition