

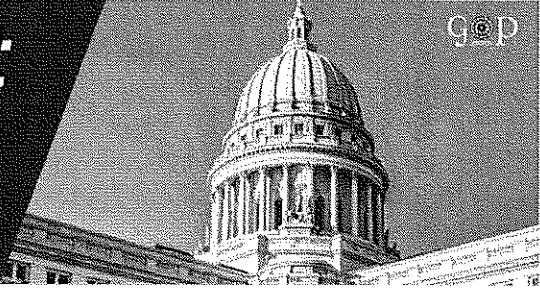


HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

RESPONSIBLE STIMULUS PLAN:

**INVEST IN PEOPLE.
IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE.
BOOST OUR ECONOMY.**



April 6, 2021

Assembly Committee on State Affairs

Testimony on Assembly Bills 232, 240, 241 and 243

Thank you Chair Swearingen and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify in favor of Assembly Bills (AB) 232, 240, 241 and 243. These bills are part of our Responsible Stimulus Plan and I appreciate the opportunity to support our efforts on behalf of the people of Wisconsin.

The Responsible Stimulus Plan reflects the legislature's priorities to invest in people, improve infrastructure and boost our economy as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a thoughtful, thorough plan to work with the Governor to dedicate massive Federal investments from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) into the things that matter most to the people we serve.

Both houses of the legislature have spent considerable time and effort to develop a real plan after listening and understanding the needs of our people, communities and industries. This plan provides relief and investment to all communities, of all sizes, statewide. Our plan puts money back into the hands of the people.

AB 232 provides relief to families statewide by returning 10% of their 2020 property taxes to them. This legislation will directly and immediately help our citizens who are working hard to recover and rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic.

AB 240 will fulfill the one-time funding for the actual building of the statewide interoperable communications system and the updates needed on existing systems. This public safety system is critical for our state and the unexpected federal aid Wisconsin is receiving through ARPA is the perfect opportunity to upgrade our critical emergency response and public safety infrastructure. The bill directs \$53.2M to upgrade WISCOM and ESInet infrastructure as well as GIS mapping to improve the accuracy of the systems and improve response times. The bill also directs a grant to northwest Wisconsin to expand mental health bed capacity and improve local law enforcement responses to mental health crises, which is a critical need in northern Wisconsin.

AB 241 directs the Governor to dedicate \$500 million of ARPA funding to repay debt or pay for necessary capital building projects. Many Americans have paid off debt with the stimulus funds from our Federal government. Wisconsin should follow their example.

AB 243 makes many strong investments in our water infrastructure and environmental protections. This bill solves the lead lateral problem once-and-for-all by committing \$40 million to replacing lead service lines on private properties. It also allocates \$18.5 million for nonpoint source programs, \$2 million for well compensation grants and another \$500,000 for well testing and public education. These are all strong priorities for Wisconsin's water and natural resources.

Again, please accept this testimony in support of legislation that will support the people of our state who are working to recover and move forward after the last unprecedented year in our history. I believe these bills will make a real difference.

I apologize that I was not able to attend in person due to a meeting of the Joint Committee on Finance (JFC). However, I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of these bills.

DAVE MURPHY

State Representative • 56th Assembly District

Assembly Committee on State Affairs

April 6, 2021

Assembly Bill 241

Mr. Chair and committee members, thank you for allowing me to testify before you today.

The federal government is sending Wisconsin and other states money, a lot of money, that it doesn't have. The United States is borrowing every single dollar of this money.

Ask yourselves, if you have extra money, what is the most responsible thing to do with it?

My teenage granddaughter would like to buy a horse. Maybe she saves up and has enough to purchase a horse. She thinks she can manage the financial responsibility of owning a horse, but what happens next year and the year after that? Where is that money coming from? That's what teenagers do.

Instead, responsible adults would pay off credit card debt or other bills when they get extra money. If we pay off debt, Wisconsinites won't go so far into debt as other states.

We'd have more GPR and it would be easier to budget going forward.

Paying down debt or even funding our next great idea is far more a value than wastefully spending one-time money.

Thank you.

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DUEY STROEBEL

STATE SENATOR • 20TH DISTRICT

Testimony on SB 272 / AB 241

April 6, 2021

Good morning Chairman Marklein and Finance Committee colleagues. Earlier this year Congress passed, and the president signed, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 into law. This is the latest round of federal stimulus money resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Wisconsin will receive about \$5.7 billion out of the bill's \$1.9 trillion in new federal spending.

None of this federal money was accounted for in Gov. Tony Evers' proposed budget because that document was completed prior to the stimulus bill becoming law. This money isn't exactly "free money," because strings are attached. It comes with the stipulation that states not use it to lower tax rates, reduce expenditures or otherwise balance the operating funds in their fiscal house. We also know that as the funds move through federal agencies it is possible more restrictions are put in place before it arrives in Wisconsin.

Instead of using this money in a way that locks Wisconsin taxpayers into expensive maintenance-of-effort spending increases down the road, I propose that we use just a portion of this federal money to pay down state debt as many Americans have with a portion of their stimulus checks. Under SB 272 / AB 241, the state of Wisconsin would allocate \$250 million dollars to pay down outstanding public debt in the 2021-2022 fiscal year. An additional \$250 million would be used to simultaneously pay down outstanding transportation debt. If, for whatever reason, one or both of these uses is ineligible for the federal funding, then the money is directed to be spent on projects outlined in the 2021 – 2023 Authorized State Building Program in lieu of borrowing for those projects.

Thank you for your time today and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.