



SCOTT FITZGERALD

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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Contact – Senator Scott Fitzgerald, (608) 266-5660

Democrats: Enough Tax Increases to Sink a Battleship

[Madison, Wisc....] In an article in today's *Lakeland Times*, Wisconsin Democrats finally admitted what the rest of us already knew: that the 2009-2011 state budget bill that they passed last summer raises enough taxes and fees to "sink a good sized battleship." The publication highlighted an email correspondence between Senator Jim Holperin (D-Conover) and a constituent. After months of the Democrats portraying the budget bill as a responsible piece of legislation that will benefit the average taxpayer, Holperin admitted in the email that he and his Democrat colleagues greatly increased the burden on taxpayers in 2009.

"You know the Governor's got enough little tax and fee hikes in that budget of his to sink a good sized battleship," wrote Holperin. This admission comes after Assembly and Senate Democrats spent months characterizing the 2009-2011 budget as a huge success and insisting that the actions taken in the budget bill were responsible.

"We tightened our belt -- all agencies and the Legislature," Senate Majority Leader Russ Decker (D-Weston) said in a June 18, 2009 article on Channel 3000. "We looked to squeeze every nickel out of every dollar throughout this process, but we invest in jobs."

"Through deep spending cuts, Democrats protected middle-class workers and families from tax increases," wrote Assembly Speaker Mike Sheridan (D-Janesville) in a July 3, 2009 column on the budget. "The bottom line is that Democrats—and sadly, Democrats alone—have delivered a responsible, forward-thinking, balanced budget.... With quick and thoughtful action, Democrats solved the worst budget crisis in state history, setting Wisconsin on a track to fiscal soundness and future prosperity."

The column is a sharp contrast to Holperin's frank email correspondence about the budget bill. "We Democrats authorized all kinds of new taxes in the recently adopted state budget (cigarette taxes, capital gains taxes, solid waste fees, cell phone tax, boat registration fee, etc. etc.) and took a lot of heat for that," Holperin wrote.

"Senator Holperin admitted what the Democrats have been long denying to taxpayers. Now the truth finally comes out," said Senate Republican Leader Scott Fitzgerald (R-Juneau). "They enacted nearly \$5 billion of tax and fee increases at one of the worst possible economic times. The Democrats' actions this session worsened our state's economic situation and will place a greater burden on Wisconsin taxpayers."

Since December 2007, Wisconsin has lost 163,800 jobs or 5.7% of its workforce. Manufacturing has taken the biggest hit with 40 percent of the job cuts in that field. In the past two years, 62,800 factory jobs in Wisconsin have disappeared.

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STATE CAPITOL

P.O. Box 7882 • MADISON, WISCONSIN 53707-7882 • SEN.FITZGERALD@LEGIS.WISCONSIN.GOV

TELEPHONE: (608) 266-5660 • FAX: (608) 267-6795