

# Vote No: Save Wisconsin's Fiscal Watchdog

## *State Treasurer Ballot Initiative*

On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Wisconsin voters will be presented with a ballot initiative to remove the Office of State Treasurer from our Constitution. This initiative has quietly passed through two sessions of the state legislature and is now in its final phase. If successful, the lieutenant governor would replace the Treasurer on the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL), which oversees the State Trust Fund Loan Program, and four public school trust funds.

**Why does this matter to local communities in Wisconsin?** The Treasurer, as the State's financial officer, helps to oversee the State Trust Fund Loan Program and the public school trust funds. Because the Office of the Treasurer is not involved in the state budget process run by the Governor and the Legislature, it serves as the ideal custodian to protect the integrity of these funds. The **State Trust Fund Loan Program** provides financing opportunities for municipalities for public purpose projects that include public safety, water and sewage treatment, and unfunded prior service pension liabilities. *In the past 10 years, the fund has invested over \$1 billion that has benefited communities in all 72 counties in Wisconsin.* These investments have included:

ON APRIL 3RD

**VOTE NO TO  
SAVE THE  
OFFICE OF THE  
TREASURER**



- \$220,920,000 in Economic Development
- \$624,560,000 in Infrastructure, Capital Equipment & Operations
- \$102,800,000 in Refinance of Pension Liabilities
- \$310,320,000 in Refinance of Debt

There has been a concerted effort to consolidate power within the Governor's office by transferring many of the responsibilities previously held by the Treasurer to the Governor's Department of Administration and the Department of Revenue. We have seen firsthand how this concentration of power not only removes critical checks and balances, but also erodes the

financial strength of these public funds. There are two legislative proposals that threaten the efficacy of these funds:

- **Ending the State Trust Fund Loan Program and Common School Fund:** Proposed legislation would end the State Trust Fund Program that benefits towns, villages, and public schools. The State Trust Fund has invested over \$1 billion through loans to our local communities over the past 10 years. In fiscal year 2017, the Common School Fund provided \$32.1 million to Wisconsin school libraries and media centers.
- **Investment in Real Estate for Office Space:** The investment rules would now allow trust fund monies to acquire land and construction for the primary purpose of leasing back to state departments and agencies -- ***increasing investment risk while depleting critical fund balances.***

This is an unprecedented situation that could lead to disastrous consequences down the road for Wisconsin. We need to keep the Office of the State Treasurer and reinstate its functions – so it can serve as the financial expert that manages the trust funds, oversees financial operations, evaluates risk, and advocates on behalf of the taxpayer.

**Every state in the U.S. has a Treasurer or an equivalent office**

**Vote No: Save Wisconsin's Fiscal Watchdog: We have an opportunity to defeat this amendment at the ballot box on April 3, 2018 -- through the Vote No Initiative.** With general awareness of this constitutional amendment startlingly low among Wisconsin voters, our plan is to educate. Please visit [www.saveourfiscalwatchdog.org](http://www.saveourfiscalwatchdog.org)