

# Property Tax Relief Needed

Governor Scott Walker Opinion/Editorial

We need property tax relief.

For too long, middle-class taxpayers have been stuck with the costs of paying for more and more government. In 2000, the average property tax on a median value home in Wisconsin was \$2,110. By 2006 it had risen to \$2,729. Today it's \$2,963. Without the property tax reforms in our budget, these middle-class tax bills would rise to \$3,425 by 2013.

These increases hurt middle-class taxpayers. They make it harder for the retired couple living on a fixed income to stay in their home or for the young couple who are saving to buy their first house so they can start a family. Rising property tax bills also hurt the blue-collar family who took a pay freeze to keep their jobs and they hurt small businesses that are struggling to cover payroll.

That's why, amid all the difficult choices we had to make in our new budget, we're implementing a real property tax freeze.

Our property tax reforms will save the typical taxpayer nearly \$750 over the next two years. That's real money we're keeping in the pockets of middle-class taxpayers across Wisconsin.

Protecting the middle-class and promoting job growth are key components of our budget reforms that provide long-term solutions.

Think about this: how many people would run up a huge bill and then ask their children to pay it? Sounds pretty irresponsible, yet that is what the government has done for years. Given this fiscal instability it's not surprising that businesses have been hesitant to add more capital or hire more workers.

Two years ago, the last Governor and state Legislature ran up the largest structural deficit in recorded history. Now we are stuck with the bill. In contrast, our budget makes the hard decisions. By tackling the tough choices, we are making a commitment to the future. We are showing our children that we are willing to take on today's challenges, so they can grow up in a Wisconsin at least as great as the one we grew up in. In doing so, we also protect middle class taxpayers who always seem to get stuck with the bill.

Our budget plan balances a \$3.6 billion deficit and reduces the structural deficit by more than \$2 billion. That is why a national bond rating agency called our budget "credit positive" (when was the last time anything in government was called positive?) These signs of fiscal stability will give job creators the confidence they need to begin expanding and start hiring.

I think our state is moving in the right direction. Since the start of the year, more than 24,000 jobs have been created in the private sector in Wisconsin, including more than 11,000 manufacturing jobs. Now, we are taking even more positive action through our fiscally-responsible budget proposal.

Getting the state's finances in order, creating a better environment for job creation, protecting vital services and saving middle-class taxpayers money; these are the core objectives of our biennial budget plan. These plans will help get Wisconsin working again.