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Walker Proposes Sales Tax Holiday For Back-To-School Purchases

Assembly Republicans Say Sales Tax Holiday Next Year Is Priority

By Ross Terrell, The Associated Press

Updated:

Wednesday, September 7, 2016, 11:24am

Wisconsinites could get a tax break for back-to-school shopping next year, under a new proposal from Gov. Scott Walker.

Walker unveiled the proposal to make the first weekend in August next year and again in 2018 a tax holiday at a news conference Wednesday at Shopko's headquarters in Green Bay.

Walker said it takes a lot to get kids ready to go back to school, and the expenses can add up quickly.

"So they're at an incredible advantage to have that sales tax holiday to make it more affordable for families from the state to get those back to school items and then to add incentive to do it here at stores that operate in the state of Wisconsin," Walker said later in the day at a press event at Kohl's in Menomonee Falls.

The tax break will cost about \$11 million, Walker said. Under his plan, the sales tax would be waived on school supplies, computers costing less than \$750 and clothing items costing less than \$75 each.

A recent study from the Tax Foundation found sales tax holidays don't promote economic growth because shoppers just shift purchases. And retailers often hike prices, which reduce customer savings. Walker said he hopes that isn't the case in Wisconsin.

"I think what you're going to find here particularly — again with big retailers like Kohl's, Shopko and others — is it'll be a little bit like what you have on the day after Thanksgiving when there are major sales to get people into the stores," Walker said. "I think it'll drive more volume in and that's really what we're hoping for."

Assembly Republicans on Wednesday also said passing a sales tax holiday next year is one of their priorities. Republicans proposed a \$13 million sales tax holiday last session but it failed to pass.

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