

Statement from Sen. Argall:

“When the school property tax was devised in 1834, we were educating our children in one room schoolhouses and only property owners could vote in elections. In an agrarian society, a farmer with 40 acres had more money than a property owner with only 4 acres. At the time, the property tax represented one’s wealth. We no longer teach children in one room schoolhouses, nor do we only allow property owners to vote in elections, but we still have the same system for public school financing in place that was created in the 19th century.

“Over the years, the state has tried to tweak, reform and reduce the school property tax burden. After decades of trying, a statewide group came up with a plan to eliminate it altogether and replace it with a fairer way that represents a 21st century model for education funding.

“Under this plan created by over 80 taxpayer advocacy groups from [across the state](#), schools would receive the exact same amount they receive under the current system and each year, they would receive an increase tied to the Statewide Average Weekly Wage. The funding would come from income and sales tax increases, which is much more in line with one’s ability to pay compared to an archaic school property tax system. Think about it: you could literally be taxed out of your house even after you pay it off – that’s crazy! It is a system that is truly rotten at its core.

“We believe this proposal will force the inequities in public education to be addressed. An analysis from the Independent Fiscal Office on this proposal found that by eliminating school property taxes, the market value of housing would increase. That is a very important factor in when looking at poorer school districts with declining local tax bases.”