

Assembly approves GOP amendment to budget, moves onto final debate

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The state Assembly has moved onto debating the biennial budget's passage after approving what GOP authors called a "technical" amendment.

Democrats, whose 19 amendments to the budget were rejected, complained they weren't being given enough time to review the GOP amendment.

"You aren't interested in lawmaking," said Rep. Katrina Shankland, D-Stevens Point. "You're interested in pushing things through."

But Vos said the amendment is "about as technical as can be" and is correcting drafting errors.

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Among the amendment's provisions, according to a Legislative Fiscal Bureau summary, are:

- *deleting a provision requiring DOT to install a railroad gate crossing in Winnebago County
- *enumerating a Department of Natural Resources project to build a communications tower at the ranger station in Pattison State Park
- *enumerating the reconstruction of the Eagle Tower at Peninsula State Park
- *and Medicaid funding rate increases for ambulatory surgical centers.

Rep. Mike Rohrkaste, R-Neenah, said some of those centers would close without the funds.

"If those shut down, these people have nowhere else to go," he said.

Vos also said the amendment has “nothing from the Senate,” meaning Assembly Republicans had declined to make changes to the state budget to possibly win support from some of their GOP colleagues in the Senate.

Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, has said he did not have the 17 votes needed to pass the bill in his house.

But Vos told reporters earlier today he wouldn't be “held hostage” by senators who want last-minute additions to the budget even though they've had months to weigh in on negotiations.

“We are not making wholesale changes to appease the wishes of a single senator who has one more budget request,” he said.

[Read the amendment.](#)