

Assembly committee shoots down series of Dem amendments to Foxconn bill

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The Assembly Committee on Jobs and the Economy this afternoon shot down a series of Dem amendments to the Foxconn bill, including one that would have revoked the Taiwanese company's tax credit eligibility if 70 percent of its workforce isn't made up of Wisconsin residents

The committee's executive session, which kicked off at 3 p.m., opened by taking up 23 different Dem amendments. So far, members have shot down eight of them on an 8-5 party line vote.

That includes an amendment that would have required the final contract with Foxconn to have the company employ at least 3,000 full time workers by Jan. 1, 2021 and continually from then on.

Republicans on the committee expressed frustration that Dems were proposing so many changes.

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Committee chair Adam Neylon, R-Pewaukee, said while Dem Rep. Todd Ohnstad had worked closely with him on the substitute amendment, he didn't believe any of the other side's changes "should be considered friendly."

Rep. John Macco, R-Ledgeview, said committee members had worked hard to put together assurances the bill moves forward.

"I just find this whole thing disingenuous and frustrating," he said.

But Ohnstad, D-Kenosha, said collaborating on the sub amendment didn't mean "that we don't have other concerns that we want to get fixed tonight or get fixed before final vote on Thursday."

Meanwhile, Dems defended their amendments, including a couple that would have required Foxconn pay a certain hourly wage in order to be eligible for tax incentives, as safeguards for Wisconsin residents.

"If we don't guarantee a living wage, a high wage, a wage people can actually live on ... we're just creating another whole population of working poor," said Rep. Christine Sinicki, D-Milwaukee.

But Republicans countered the U.S. Constitution could prohibit Wisconsin from requiring Foxconn to meet a certain percentage of Wisconsin employees. They also pointed to the substitute amendment, released Friday, that includes language requiring that the final contract with Foxconn encourage the Taiwanese company to hire Wisconsin workers "when practically possible."