

One Wisconsin Now: Before the ink is dry on the contract, Gov. Scott Walker running away from his Foxconn deal

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MADISON, Wis. — Gov. Scott Walker couldn't say "Foxconn" enough throughout the summer months, touting his efforts to deliver the largest state subsidy to a foreign corporation in history. But now, as polls consistently find strong public opposition to the deal and a contract is signed putting state taxpayers on the hook for up to \$4 billion, Walker doesn't even mention Foxconn in his stump speech as he jets around the state announcing he is running for election in 2018.

"We all know Scott Walker will do or say anything to try to win an election," commented One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Scot Ross. "He was willing to give away \$4 billion in our tax dollars to Foxconn because he thought it would help him win an election. Now, with strong public opposition to his terrible deal, the word 'Foxconn' doesn't even cross his lips on the campaign trail."

Recent public opinion polling has found widespread opposition to the Foxconn deal and deep suspicion about Gov. Walker's political motivations in concocting the corporate giveaway. A survey of 1,116 registered Wisconsin voters conducted by Public Policy Polling on October 16 and 17 found a 49 percent plurality agreed the deal was "mainly to help him win re-election next year."

Respondents also expressed trepidation about specific provisions of the deal. By a 55-24 percent margin Wisconsinites were concerned the billions going to Foxconn will require cuts to other priorities like public schools, health care and roads. Special exemptions from environmental protections and limits on the authority of judges in litigation involving Foxconn were also opposed by 57 and 54 percent of respondents respectively.

As a contract between the state and Taiwanese electronics manufacturer Foxconn is signed to implement provisions passed in legislation approved by the Republican-controlled legislature and signed by Gov. Walker, Ross noted that public opposition to Walker's giveaway is little surprise given that the deal:

Fails to protect taxpayers from paying for jobs for Illinois workers: There is nothing in the proposal that guarantees workers in the new plant come from Wisconsin, meaning taxpayers will be subsidizing jobs for workers from Illinois and other states;

Fails to pay off: Figures from the independent Legislative Fiscal Bureau show that even with the rosiest projections and complete suspension of disbelief, it would take at least 25 years for the state to break even on the project. In fact, taxpayers will get \$181 million a year in tax revenue but have to pay \$250 million a year;

Fails to protect workers: Foxconn Chair Terry Gou, who has a net worth of well over \$10 billion, referred to his employees as "animals" and had an actual zookeeper train his senior management. Yet the bill contains no provisions to protect workers' rights as Americans to choose to form a union;

Fails to protect communities from pollution: The bill would exempt Foxconn from state environmental regulations requiring environmental analysis of the project and protecting wetlands and other waterways;

Fails to protect Wisconsinites' right to their day in court and respect our judicial system: A special process is created for lawsuits on the Foxconn project, lower court rulings could be immediately stayed upon appeal and could be expedited for review by the Wisconsin Supreme Court, which is controlled by Republicans following \$9 million in spending by the pro-Foxconn Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce.

Ross concluded, "While Scott Walker can try to run away from Foxconn on the campaign trail, he's deluding himself if he thinks the people of Wisconsin he stuck with this bad deal are going to let him hide from it."