

One Wisconsin Now: Indiana GOP leader admits repealing prevailing wage ‘hasn’t saved a penny’

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Madison, Wisconsin — With the Republican-controlled Senate Labor Regulatory Reform Committee poised Wednesday morning to vote for a misguided repeal of prevailing wage laws for public works projects, [video has surfaced from a forum April 24 in Milwaukee](#) where Republican Indiana House Assistant Majority Leader Ed Soliday angrily reveals that similar legislation passed in Indiana which went into effect in 2015 “hasn’t saved a penny.”

“We got rid of prevailing wage and so far it hasn’t saved a penny,” Soliday says during the question and answer session last week hosted by the Wisconsin Transportation Development Association in Milwaukee. “Probably the people most upset with us repealing [prevailing] wage were the locals. Because the locals, quite frankly, like to pay local contractors and they like local contractors to go to the dentist in their own town.”

[One comprehensive analysis](#) showed repealing Wisconsin’s prevailing wage laws will result in a projected \$500 million in construction value being completed by out-of-state contractors on an annual basis and a yearly total of over \$1.2 billion being lost due to reduced economic activity. [A second analysis](#) revealed 885 public construction jobs left Indiana after repeal of prevailing wage and 770 jobs popped up across the border in Kentucky.

One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Scot Ross said he “wasn’t surprised the Wisconsin Republicans are using lies and deception to level yet another attack on Wisconsin workers.” Ross said the list of Republican co-authors on the bill was “a who’s who of Wisconsin’s anti-worker extremists.”

In the video obtained by One Wisconsin Now, Republican Soliday also mocks the outrageous claims about savings made by right-wing organizations like the Koch Brothers' Americans for Prosperity. In Indiana, anti-worker groups claimed prevailing wage repeal would save taxpayers 22 percent on construction costs. Both the Wisconsin Americans for Prosperity and the Bradley Foundation-funded Maclver Institute have claimed prevailing wage repeal would save 23 percent in costs.

"The exaggerations in those hearings that we were going to save 22 percent," Soliday says. "Well, total labor costs right now in road construction is about 22 percent, and I haven't noticed anyone who's going to work for free. [They claim] there's some magic state out there that's going to send all these workers into work for \$10 an hour and it's just not going to happen. There's not 22 percent savings out there when the total cost of labor is 22 percent. It's rhetoric."

Soliday adds, "So far, I haven't seen a dime of savings out of it."

Wisconsin's independent Legislative Fiscal Bureau reported no fiscal impact nor budget savings for taxpayers by repealing prevailing wage laws.