

Rep. Barca: Assembly Democratic leaders call for joint finance hearing on proposed Foxconn deal

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Contact: Olivia Hwang, [608.266.5504](tel:608.266.5504)

Madison – Six Democratic Assembly leaders sent a letter to Speaker Robin Vos and Joint Committee on Finance Chairman John Nygren urging Republican leaders to hold a hearing on the Foxconn deal that would focus on the long-term fiscal implications to state taxpayers. The letter, signed by Representatives Peter Barca (D – Kenosha), Dianne Hesselbein (D – Middleton), Mark Spreitzer (D – Beloit), Steve Doyle (D – La Crosse), Katrina Shankland (D – Stevens Point), and Gordon Hintz (D – Oshkosh) raised concerns that Assembly Republicans were rushing the Foxconn deal through the Assembly without fully considering needed protections for Wisconsin taxpayers. The letter also noted that many members of the public who registered to speak at Thursday’s hearing in the Committee on Jobs and the Economy were denied the ability to speak on the bill as public testimony wasn’t allowed until five hours after it was scheduled to begin.

“Anything worth doing is worth doing the best-possible way,” said Assembly Minority Leader Barca. “While it is ultimately Gov. Walker’s responsibility to make sure Wisconsin taxpayers get a good deal, the legislature also plays an important role in formalizing protections for Wisconsin taxpayers. We must also work together to ensure that small businesses and Wisconsin workers are included in this deal to the fullest degree possible.”

“As the legislature’s budget committee, it is literally the Joint Finance Committee’s job to deliberate large-scale proposals that will impact current and future budgets,” said Rep. Shankland. “Just as it’s important to create jobs, it’s also important to

protect taxpayers by ensuring that we are best informed about how our fiscal decisions will impact the long-term sustainability of the state's coffers. If Republican leadership were truly proud of the Foxconn proposal and want it to pass on its merits, they would welcome the diligent oversight that the Joint Finance Committee would provide."

"While this could be an exciting opportunity for Wisconsin, any deal must be a fair deal for taxpayers," said Rep. Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh) "Unfortunately, both Governor Walker and Foxconn have a history of over promising and under performing, and in this proposal, taxpayers will be assuming all of the risks. If this deal is really as amazing as they say, what's the rush? This should be a huge red flag, and there is no excuse to ram this bill through without the budget committee's oversight."

"In addition to needing a full hearing before the Joint Committee on Finance, we need a full fiscal analysis," said Assembly Assistant Minority Leader Hesselbein. "The first hearing we had on this proposal took place before we knew how much the proposed deal could cost taxpayers across the state each year. Voting on this bill without knowing its fiscal impact on future state budgets would be like taking out a mortgage for a home without knowing how much it costs. It just doesn't make sense."

Representatives Shankland and Hintz serve on the Joint Committee on Finance.

The full letter is available [here](#).