

Sen. Shilling: Troubled jobs agency finalizes \$3 billion Foxconn contract

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MADISON, WI – Since Governor Walker and Republican lawmakers formed the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) in 2011, the agency has been plagued by scandals, mismanagement and under-performance. Despite ongoing management issues and accounting problems, Gov. Walker's jobs agency approved the final contract paving the way for the largest taxpayer giveaway to a foreign corporation in U.S. history.

"Gov. Walker and his administration are putting home-grown businesses at a competitive disadvantage while committing taxpayers to decades of economic costs and liabilities," said Senate Democratic Leader Jennifer Shilling (D-La Crosse). "Our state has the third worst roads in the nation and our schools are struggling. It's no surprise that Wisconsin residents and communities are frustrated by Gov. Walker's decision to prioritize tax giveaways to a foreign corporation."

With the high unpredictability in the electronics industry, workforce shortage issues and the company's stated desire to automate its manufacturing operation, it is unclear how many of the promised jobs will materialize. Numerous media outlets have highlighted a pattern of Foxconn's broken promises on economic development.

"For the past six years, Gov. Walker's administration hasn't been able to track job numbers or prevent tax dollars from going to companies that have outsourced Wisconsin jobs," said Shilling. "Despite these glaring problems, Republicans are putting this troubled agency in charge of the largest taxpayer-funded giveaway to a foreign corporation in U.S. history. I'm not convinced by any stretch of the

imagination that this administration is able to protect taxpayers and hold Foxconn accountable if it doesn't live up to its promises.”

The cash payments made to Foxconn will result in fewer state dollars going to local schools, roads and community development. Under the best-case scenarios, it will be at least 25 years until the state could potentially break even on its investment. Rather than massive tax breaks and special loopholes for a foreign corporation, Democrats have said the state should prioritize investments in Wisconsin workers, businesses and communities.