

Bill to ban local governments from creating own labor laws clears Assembly

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The Assembly early this morning [voted 58-32](#) along party lines on bill that would prohibit municipalities from creating their own local labor laws with a new amendment that would make it clear the bill wouldn't apply to Foxconn.

The [newly drafted amendment](#), which caused the chamber to stand informal twice between 11 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. as lawmakers rushed to finalize it, adds language in four places in the bill saying "nothing in this subsection applies with respect to or interferes with" the Taiwanese tech company's work in Wisconsin.

The changes aimed to assuage concerns from some that provisions in the bill could potentially have unintended consequences on Foxconn's future development plans in Racine County. It passed on a voice vote.

While bill backers have touted the bill as a way to prevent the state from becoming a patchwork of labor laws, critics have countered the bill would undermine local control, reduce the quality of the workforce and lead to inequity.

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Rep. Greta Neubauer, in her maiden floor speech as a newly elected official, said she has been hearing concerns from her constituents the bill would preempt Racine County's ability to get "local people hired" at Foxconn.

But the Racine Dem said all the amendment does is "carve Racine out of the bill," a move she says doesn't satisfy her concerns.

"If these programs are necessary to help Racine succeed, they are necessary for

the rest of the state,” she said.

But bill author Rep. Rob Hutton, R-Brookfield, defended the legislation’s greater intention, saying it would help give employers across the state certainty when conducting business.

“This legislation tells employers we want you to hire our hard working citizens in Wisconsin,” he said.

The bill would prohibit municipal and county governments from enforcing their own laws related hours, overtime and benefits. It also would bar cities and counties from setting a minimum wage for their employees and those who perform work under a contract for them, and for creating more stringent licensing requirements than the state already has in place. The bill would also prevent them from requiring an employee to submit to any collective bargaining provisions.

Earlier this week, the legislation was amended in committee to remove a provision that would have prohibited municipal and county governments from enforcing laws related to employment discrimination. Local governments would be able, under the version that passed today, to have their own discrimination ordinances.

The legislation now heads to the Senate.