

One Wisconsin Now: GOP pushes tax giveaway plan that pays more for fewer jobs

Posted on Wednesday, Nov 14, 2018

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Kimberly-Clark Paid \$1 in Net State Income Tax Since 2013, Wants \$100 Million Windfall to Close Plant, Cut Over 100 Jobs

MADISON, Wis. — The Republican-controlled Joint Committee on Finance will convene today to consider legislation to potentially give over \$100 million in state tax dollars to the Kimberly-Clark corporation, which has, according to state records, paid \$1 in net state income tax since 2013. One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Scot Ross blasted the plan that could see Wisconsin taxpayers giving money to a company for closing a factory and cutting jobs.

“How much less than zero state income taxes does Kimberly-Clark think they ought to pay,” asked Ross. “It’s outrageous that Republicans in the legislature are trying to put state taxpayers on the hook for \$100 million or more for a corporation whose plan is to close a factory and fire workers.”

According to state tax records, since 2013 Kimberly-Clark has paid \$1 in net state income taxes. Records for tax year 2017 were unavailable. Because the tax giveaway being proposed by Republicans includes refundable credits, state taxpayers would literally be writing checks to the corporation, which in exchange has said they will close a factory and fire over 100 current employees.

As reported by the Associated Press, it appears a contract lobbyist retained by Kimberly-Clark tried to help sell this bad deal for taxpayers with some sleazy tactics:

“A new Kimberly-Clark lobbyist and his wife gave Republican legislators and their supporters more than \$4,000 in late August ... The donations came just weeks before Fitzgerald and Vos ordered the Legislature to reconvene in a lame-duck session following the Nov. 6 elections to consider a \$100 million tax incentive bill for Kimberly-Clark.”

The proposal passed the Republican-controlled State Assembly in early 2018, but the Republican-controlled Senate did not take up the bill. While the bill has been revived as part of a lame duck legislative session, it faces bipartisan opposition.