

# Barnes says Foxconn needs to prove it will keep its promises

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Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes says several reports of Foxconn changing plans are “frustrating,” but that with investments already made he hopes the Taiwanese tech company creates the jobs it promised.

“Foxconn needs to prove, not just to us, they need to prove to everybody in the state of Wisconsin ... that they are going to do the work they said they are going to do,” Barnes said at a luncheon hosted by the Milwaukee Press Club and WisPolitics.com February 7. “So it’s very frustrating looking at them change course all of the time.”

Barnes was critical of Foxconn, saying the company has not kept promises in the past, but he challenged them to create the promised jobs in Wisconsin.

“Foxconn has traditionally not lived up to its promises, but I will say that since it is here in theory, I dare Foxconn to do the correct thing,” Barnes said. “I dare them to create jobs. I challenge them to do that, because, obviously, since it’s here we want things to work out as best as they can right now.”

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Barnes’ comments follow news last week from an interview with a Foxconn executive that the company would be changing its focus away from manufacturing LCD screens at its Mount Pleasant site, and a disputed report from a Japanese publication that the project was on hold. Foxconn has since reaffirmed its plan to build a Generation 6 facility, which would produce smaller LCD screens than those originally envisioned when the state struck the \$3 billion deal with the company.

Barnes noted the local infrastructure investments already made and how people in the area lost homes and farms to eminent domain for Foxconn to acquire land for

the complex.

“We don’t need that to be all for naught,” he said. “We have to make sure that it is as beneficial a project as it can be.”

Barnes also addressed Evers’ promise on the campaign trail to reduce the state’s prison population.

He said the key to reducing the prison population is reducing recidivism.

“If we can curb recidivism in the state, the prison population will ultimately dwindle because the overwhelming majority of people in prison are not there for life,” Barnes said. He advocated more reentry program to ensure “people who are released have a pathway back into society.”

Barnes also said a lot of people are in prison for technical parole and probation revocations along with testing positive for marijuana, which Barnes said should be legalized.

Additionally, he said treatment should be a focus for non-violent offenders with mental health or substance abuse issues.

“The models are there,” Barnes said. “Other states are doing it, we’re just not there for whatever reason.”