

Evers tells 'UpFront' GOP to blame for 'constitutional crisis'

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Democratic Gov. Tony Evers agreed Wisconsin is in a "constitutional crisis" but said it was "created by the Republicans in the lame-duck session."

"Yes, there is a constitutional crisis. It will be resolved," Evers told "UpFront," produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com.

Evers said Republicans sought to "overturn the will of the people" in their December extraordinary session, and "they created lots of problems and stumbling blocks for me and the attorney general to do our jobs."

"UpFront" host Adrienne Pedersen asked Evers about Republican claims that he is unwilling to meet with them.

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"That's a stretch," Evers said.

"I've met with over 100 legislators in my office, individually, Republicans and Democrats," Evers said.

"The idea that somehow I've built a wall to keep people out, and keep legislators out, that's just not true," he said.

Evers said Republicans leaders are "huffing and puffing" and "the idea that somehow we need to argue about how much time we spend with each other is, frankly, the people of Wisconsin want better from us."

Evers also predicted an increase in the state's gas tax.

"I'm not sure how we fund roads without raising the gas tax," he said. "There has been no other answer."

In his budget, Evers proposed a gas tax hike of 8 cents a gallon, but also proposed offsetting that by eliminating the minimum mark-up on gas.

Evers recently held a listening session in Stevens Point, where he said nearly 140 people attended and broke into small groups for discussion.

"I thought it was great," he said, adding that people were "very supportive of our budget."

He plans another listening session Tuesday in southeastern Wisconsin.

Evers also said he proposed a balanced budget that reflects what people have told him they want.

"They want good health care, good transportation, and making sure that their schools are strong," he said.

Pedersen asked how often he would use his veto pen.

"As often as I find necessary to protect the people of Wisconsin from bad legislation," said.

Evers predicted a budget would be reached with the Republican-controlled Legislature in the summer or fall.

"At the end of the day, the huffing and puffing will end, and we'll have a budget, and will it look exactly like the budget I proposed? Probably not," Evers said.

"Will it look a budget that the Republicans are proposing? Unlikely, because I have a veto pen," he said.

"We'll get there, but in order to get there, we need to make sure everybody has been heard," Evers said.

In an "UpFront" web extra, Evers said he thought Wisconsin would take the federal Medicaid expansion, because "it is the will of the people" and the "previous administration left our tax dollars in DC when they didn't expand Medicaid."

“I believe at the end of the day we will be taking that Medicaid expansion money,” he said.

See more from the show: <https://www.wisn.com/upfront>