

One Wisconsin Now: Robin Vos giving \$500 an hour lawyers a blank check to defend his scheme to rig the rules for Foxconn

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'The Only Thing Wisconsin Taxpayers are Getting Out of These Republican Deals is Being Stuck With the Bill'

MADISON, Wis. — Assembly Speaker Robin Vos and legislative Republicans are giving high priced lawyers a blank check to defend their actions to rig the rules for the troubled Foxconn project in Southeastern Wisconsin. According to media reports, Vos and others have authorized an unlimited amount of fees to an out of state law firm whose lawyers will bill Wisconsin taxpayers at a rate of \$500 per hour.

“Robin Vos is handing out a blank check to an out of state law firm to defend himself and Republicans for their actions, including weakening oversight and accountability for their troubled Foxconn deal handing over the biggest state subsidy in history for a foreign corporation,” said One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Analiese Eicher.

According to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel:

“Taxpayers will pay the lead attorney for lawmakers \$500 an hour, according to contracts released Friday under the state’s open records law... There are no caps on how much attorneys for the Republicans can charge.”

The legal team defending Vos will reportedly be led by a lawyer who previously worked for defeated Republican Attorney General Brad Schimel, Misha Tseytlin. His state job, which largely consisted of filing politically motivated lawsuits against the administration of Democratic President Obama, paid slightly less than \$65 an hour. Now that Tseytlin will be defending the GOP he’s billing state taxpayers \$500 per hour.

Among those measures subject to litigation was the GOP legislature giving itself control over the board of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and shifting the state liaison for the project from the Department of Administration, overseen by Democratic Gov. Tony Evers, to WEDC. Vos’ cohorts also slashed accountability measures to verify that corporations like Foxconn are actually fulfilling their commitments before getting state tax subsidies.

Eicher noted One Wisconsin Institute recently prevailed in separate legal action brought against unconstitutional attacks on voting also passed by Republicans and signed into law by former Gov. Scott Walker in the December lame duck legislative session. In his decisive ruling, federal Judge James Peterson enforced his previous order enjoining racially discriminatory restrictions on early voting.

She concluded, “While \$500 an hour lawyers are lining up for their payday and Foxconn fails to live up to its promises the only thing Wisconsin taxpayers are getting out of these Republican deals is being stuck with the bill.”