

‘UpFront’: Vos says Evers has yet to sit down with GOP leaders to discuss budget

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Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, said he hopes GOP lawmakers eventually can sit down to negotiate a new state budget with Democratic Gov. Tony Evers. But for right now, they are not talking.

“Gov. Evers has chosen kind of this one-sided approach where he hasn’t reached out to the Legislature. He hasn’t even asked to sit down with us even though we have regularly asked for meetings,” Vos said in an interview aired Sunday on “UpFront,” produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com.

Host Adrienne Pedersen asked Vos why he was seen shaking his head “no” during the governor’s Feb. 28 budget address.

Vos said he found some of the governor’s budget proposals “egregious,” especially his plan to remove work training requirements for people receiving welfare payments.

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“I don’t want the people of Wisconsin to believe that this (budget) is something that is actually good for the state.” Vos said.

Vos said Evers “put these poison pills in there, knowing we are never going to accept tax increases. He’s made all kinds of promises to people that can never be fulfilled, because there’s not enough money in the checkbook.”

Vos said medical marijuana should be a stand-alone bill taken up later in the year, and not included in the state budget.

He said he still supports medical marijuana “in a limited way” but worries “for a lot of skeptics (Evers) has poisoned the well” by also proposing decriminalization.

The speaker also said the governor “should accept that there are some things that are non-negotiable.”

“We are never going to raise income or sales taxes as long as Republicans are in control,” Vos said.

Also on the program, Democratic Attorney General Josh Kaul discussed DOJ’s budget request for 25 new positions, including a new prosecutor dedicated to sexual assault cases.

Kaul said a sex crimes prosecutor is necessary, because approximately 1,000 DNA matches have emerged in the testing of old sexual assault kits.

“We need to make sure that those cases are investigated fully and that prosecutions are brought where they can be. Having an additional prosecutor will help with that,” Kaul said.

A backlog of untested sexual assault kits was an issue in Kaul’s race last year against former Republican Attorney General Brad Schimel. Kaul said his department will be proposing legislation “that will prevent there being another backlog of untested kits.”

“We hope to propose it in the Legislature next month,” Kaul said.

Kaul also is seeking new digital forensic examiners and new resources for the Internet Crimes Against Children unit.

“Criminals use modern technology just like the rest of us, and making sure that we have the tools to obtain evidence from those (electronic) devices is really important,” Kaul said.

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