

WisDems: POLITIFACT: “Pants on Fire” claim that Evers to blame for Foxconn changes

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“Vos and Fitzgerald’s claim [is] not only wrong, but ridiculous”

MADISON — After news that Foxconn would, yet again, be changing its plans for construction in Wisconsin, Republican leaders Robin Vos and Scott Fitzgerald were quick to point the finger at newly-inaugurated Governor Evers, claiming a “wave of economic uncertainty” caused Foxconn to scale back its plans.

Politifact Wisconsin has designated the claim “absurd,” giving it a “Pants on Fire” rating.

EXCERPTS FROM POLITIFACT:

When we asked Vos and Fitzgerald to back up their claim, Vos spokeswoman Kit Beyer noted a series of changes in Evers’ economic policy positions over time. But she said Republicans had no direct evidence connecting Foxconn’s changes to Evers or any action by the new governor...

Meanwhile, Foxconn hasn’t explicitly laid out its current plans or the reasoning behind them — but several reports have pointed to market factors rather than political ones....

Nikkei claimed the Wisconsin delay was “as a result of negotiations with new Gov. Tony Evers,” citing a company document. But its article did not quote from the document or provide additional details.

In any case, Foxconn disputed the Nikkei report and spoke positively of Evers...

“All interactions to date with Governor Evers and his team have been constructive...”

In addition, Mark Hogan, head of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp., WEDC, told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that Evers has not sought to renegotiate the Foxconn agreement or to pursue any side deals with the company — as claimed in the Nikkei report...

Experts say it simply wouldn't make sense for Foxconn — a major global player — to take action in response to a governor who was just sworn in Jan. 7, 2019.

“It's pretty clearly a partisan statement that doesn't connect to how corporations work...”

Published reports attribute the potential changes to an array of market and economic factors, including labor costs in the U.S., declining consumer demand and the trade war with China. Experts say those are historically the kinds of factors that drive business decisions, not politics.