

Dem leaders back local sales tax options, minimum wage hike

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The Legislature's top Dem leaders in a WisPolitics.com luncheon voiced support for Evers' budget proposals to raise the minimum wage and allow for expanded local sales taxes.

Evers' budget would allow counties to add an additional half-cent sales tax and municipalities of at least 30,000 people to implement a new one. The additional sales tax would have to be approved by voters through a referendum. Republicans have rejected both of those ideas and intend to craft a budget of their own.

Senate Minority Leader Janet Bewley, D-Mason, said Wisconsinites have been asking for an increased minimum wage for several years, adding "we need to do something about the minimum wage period, we need to do it."

She also said the \$10.15 Evers proposed might not be the increase to \$15 an hour that some of her Dem colleagues want.

Assembly Minority Leader Gordon Hintz, D-Oshkosh, said there needs to be some regional discretion on where and how much to increase the minimum, but that amount needs to be raised to account for inflation.

Hintz added a minimum wage increase could benefit hundreds of thousands of workers, "not just those that are at the minimum wage, but who are near the minimum wage that certainly would benefit from that ripple effect increase."

Both leaders also voiced support for Evers' local sales tax proposal.

Bewley said raising those taxes would give local municipalities a new revenue source during a time when many local governments are hurting for money.

She added allowing municipalities to raise their local sales tax could be a way for local governments to backfill revenue losses if GOP proposals like eliminating the personal property tax are enacted.

Hintz agreed.

"I think there needs to be a serious discussion of what the consequences are, especially when we don't allow for local revenue options," Hintz said. "And people that are promoting the local property tax repeal probably want to get behind some of the governor's proposals for local option revenues."

Hintz also said it's unlikely an electric car production project pitched by Foxconn will happen considering the reputations of the companies involved.

He said Fisker and Foxconn's track records of failing to fulfill their business promises make it hard for him to see how either company will fulfill their promises on electric cars.

"It's hard to take the company seriously at this point," Hintz said of Foxconn.

Fisker filed for bankruptcy in July 2020.



Watch video of yesterday's luncheon on the WisPolitics.com YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0FO8o8WdB99-9uZXQWqP6w>