

Rodriguez, Goyke debate education funding, vaccine requirements on 'UpFront'

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A Republican lawmaker on the Legislature's powerful budget-writing committee said the state would stay in compliance with federal guidelines, so as not to miss out on \$1.5 billion in federal matching funds for education.

Rep. Jessie Rodriguez, R-Oak Creek, said Wisconsin and other states just need more guidance from the federal government concerning the money.

"We've said from the beginning we want to make sure that we provide increased funding for education. We have, through categorical aids, and at the same time making sure that we were going to craft a budget for education that meets those requirements. So this is not any different than we've done in the past. We still haven't finished crafting our budget," Rodriguez said in an interview aired Sunday on "UpFront," produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com.

In the joint interview with Rodriguez, Rep. Evan Goyke, D-Milwaukee, said the stakes are too high for Republicans not to "figure it out."

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Goyke said Republicans on the Joint Committee on Finance met about 10 percent of the increase in K-12 funding the governor was calling for, which Goyke said fully funded education and "left no doubt that we would be in compliance."

"I expect (Republicans) to change their mind and change their plan, and it is on them to do so," Goyke said. "It is not the governor's responsibility to come in and fix the mess that Republicans created."

The two lawmakers also disagreed on Republican-backed legislation that would prohibit businesses and universities from requiring vaccinations for COVID-19.

"I believe that should be a private decision in consultation with your primary care doctor," Rodriguez said, adding that "it shouldn't be open for the public to know whether or not you have been vaccinated."

Goyke said businesses have a right to protect their customers and staff.

"This idea is not new. This is not created because of COVID. We have entities and businesses that require a certain level of vaccination for long-standing diseases and viruses that we've put out, that we've destroyed through widespread vaccines," he said.

In another segment, WisPolitics.com Editor JR Ross said several prominent Republicans are thinking about running against Democratic Gov. Tony Evers in 2022.

Evers announced his re-election bid Saturday night during the Democratic Party of Wisconsin's virtual convention.

Ross said the list includes state Sen. Chris Kapenga of Delafield, Madison businessman Eric Hovde, former U.S. Senate candidate Kevin Nicholson, Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow, U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher of Green Bay, and former U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy of the Wausau area.

He said Madison lobbyist Bill McCoshen, who served in the administration of former Republican Gov. Tommy Thompson, also appears to be making moves toward a run for governor.

But Ross said the one person who is actually laying the groundwork now for a bid is former Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch.

"She's got a (political action committee) that she's used to help other Republican candidates. She also has this kind of think tank to promote her ideas. She's building a foundation to run," Ross said. "Kleefisch is all but in. We expect her to announce sometime this summer, after the budget is done."

Also on the program, a Marquette University economics professor said the real estate market is red hot right now, but he isn't worried about another crash similar

to the meltdown in 2007-2008.

“The circumstances are very different in this market than that one,” said David Clark, who is a consultant for the Wisconsin Realtors Association. He said underwriting standards were lax in 2006 - 2007 and have tightened up considerably since that “house of cards.”

Clark said tight inventories, relatively strong demand driven in part by millennials, a recovering economy and low mortgage rates have combined to create the current hot housing market.

“It’s kind of a perfect storm when it comes to factors that heat up a housing market,” Clark said.

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