

Senate Republicans propose soliciting bids to operate a statewide public affairs network

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Senate Republicans are lining up behind a proposal that would solicit bids to operate a statewide public affairs network after the Assembly passed a bipartisan bill that would create an endowment for WisconsinEye.

The new proposal would direct the Department of Administration to issue a request for proposal to operate a network. A co-sponsorship memo argues that a competitive process would ensure “high-quality, secure, and cost-effective coverage of legislative, executive, and judicial proceedings while maintaining strict nonpartisanship.”

Under the [proposal](#) circulated late yesterday for cosponsorship, the network would have to:

- Provide unedited, live video and audio coverage of floor sessions, legislative committees, executive branch agency meetings, judicial proceedings, news conferences involving state government officials and related civic events.
- Livestream all legislative proceedings that are open to the public.
- Maintain an unedited archive of state government proceedings.
- Provide free access to live or archived coverage of legislative floor sessions and Joint Finance Committee meetings.
- Be strictly nonpartisan.
- Provide coverage that can't be used for campaign purposes.

The bill was circulated hours after the Assembly unanimously approved a bipartisan bill to create a \$10 million trust fund to ensure WisconsinEye remains on the air following a seven-week blackout period due to a lack of funding. The \$10 million is currently set aside as matching funds for the network, and the bill would move it into the proposed endowment.

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Fifteen of the 18 Senate Republicans are co-sponsors of the new proposal, along with GOP Reps. Lindee Brill, of Sheboygan Falls, and Chuck Wichgers, of Muskego.

There are no Senate co-sponsors of the bill that cleared the Assembly yesterday.