Vos tells 'UpFront' 'some work to do' on tax relief package

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Assembly Speaker Robin Vos said there's "some work to do" between Republicans and Gov. Tony Evers on a tax relief package using some of the state's projected $2.5 billion surplus.

The Rochester Republican said the Assembly will likely return for a special or extraordinary session.

"I think that we all have general ideas of where things are," Vos said on WISN 12's "UpFront," which is produced in partnership with WisPolitics. "I think everyone, we are all saying the same thing, that we want tax relief, Senate Republicans, Assembly Republicans, and the governor. So now we just have to define what that looks like. Compromise is hard …. It's slow. It's cumbersome. People want a quick answer. I think we'll find an answer."

Vos, the state's longest-serving speaker, announced Thursday he won't seek reelection in November after suffering a mild heart attack.

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"I was actually at my factory," Vos recalled. "I had just gone out to a meeting. I came back. My chest felt sore. I realized, wow, this is serious, so going to the hospital; they said you're having a heart attack.

"I was there overnight," he added. "And luckily for me, even though my doctor said not to, I came back in for session. I did not miss a session date in my entire tenure as a legislator."

Vos said he's received "close to 800 text messages and phone calls" in the hours since his announcement, including from former Dem Speaker Tom Loftus,

previously the longest-serving Wisconsin speaker.

"Nice statements from (David) Crowley, the mayor of Milwaukee, the governor even," he said, referring to top Dem officeholders.

But Devin Remiker, chair of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin, said in a statement that Vos "spent his career shoveling dirt on the graves of the American Dream to do the bidding of the most wealthy and powerful."

"Everybody's got a right to their opinion," Vos said in response. "And unfortunately, that is exactly why so many Americans are sick and tired of politics, right?"

Vos said he hoped Rep. Tyler August, R-Walworth, would become the next speaker if Republicans maintain control of the chamber.

"He's done a great job," Vos said. "He's been majority leader, but ...I don't get a vote."

In the final hours of the session, Vos withdrew his longstanding objections to two bills now on the governor's desk, expanding postpartum Medicaid coverage and requiring insurance companies to cover expanded breast cancer screenings for women with dense breast tissue.

"You know, that's one of the things that people just fully don't accept in the world that we live in, that people can be persuaded by folks of good intentions, right?" Vos said. "The Democrats' method is to try to derail you, to try to say you're a bad person, to not talk about the policy, but try to make it all emotions. That doesn't work. It never has, and it shouldn't. You should be focused on policy. I sat down with a lot of folks in our caucus who just simply said this is important, and they tried to make their pitch. Now, I'm not 100% sure that they're right. I still have my concerns, and I'm not sure it's the right answer, but I have to respect that when people make a good argument, and we as a group say this is what's best for Wisconsin, I have to follow."

Meanwhile, Gov. Tony Evers says the GOP tax relief plan would need to be "extraordinarily different" for it to include rebate checks.

"That's just a joke," Evers told "UpFront." "It's like buying votes. We need to get it into the system. We need to get it in places where property taxes can be relieved. Sending out checks, first of all, after about a month, people forget about it. But

secondly, it costs money to do that."

Evers said the plan would also need a significantly larger investment in education, specifically the state's equalization aid.

"We've had an opportunity now to give more money to our schools, and obviously they're willing to do some of that as it relates to special education," Evers said. "But this year, on funding for schools, we have the money to do it. We may as well provide some of the resources that I asked for to begin with."

Evers again strongly rejected the U.S. Department of Justice request for Wisconsin's voter data, an issue now tied up in the courts.

"No way," Evers said. "We would be sending something that is a state's obligation and requirements. Sending that off to Washington, D.C., is going to put Donald Trump in charge of elections, and I'll tell you, whether you're Republican or Democrat, that's the last thing you want."

Evers attended the National Governors' Association meetings in Washington late last week. The White House initially did not invite Democratic governors but reversed course before the annual bipartisan event.

"I've had moments with him," Evers said, referring to Trump. "I'm not sure he's the best listener in the world, but if I had a chance and I knew it would have an impact, I would tell him to leave the immigrants here in Wisconsin alone. They're the ones that milk our cows, that work in our factories. If they go after those folks, our economy will implode overnight. He should know that. If he doesn't know that, frankly, he shouldn't be president."

When asked whether Wisconsin sheriffs should cooperate and work with ICE in county jails, Evers said, "If there are people that are in jail because of some really heinous crime and they were found guilty of that, then take them and send them wherever. But, if you're talking the people that day-to-day work is milking cows or working in a production company or some industry, they shouldn't even be part of the conversation, and that's where the problem is. We just go into some town and pick up some people, and why were they picked up? Who knows?

"I'll tell you, the way it worked in Minnesota sucked," Evers added. "Two people are dead. We can't afford that."

Watch the program [here](#).