



DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS
JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

March 9, 2017

Senator Alberta Darling, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
317 East, State Capitol

Representative John Nygren, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
309 East, State Capitol

Dear Senator Darling and Representative Nygren:

It has come to our attention that the Republican members of the Joint Committee on Finance were briefed as a group yesterday by Employee Trust Funds (ETF) and Segal Consulting regarding Governor Walker's self-insurance proposal for Wisconsin group health insurance.

While only meetings reaching a quorum would violate the second half of the *Showers* test regarding open meetings laws, the first half of that test is whether or not the governmental body is meeting to discuss matters before the committee. The *Showers* test for open meetings is met when a governing body is meeting for a purpose and the number of members constitutes a quorum. Clearly Joint Committee on Finance action on the Group Insurance Board recommendations for self-insurance is a matter before the committee. The Joint Committee on Finance is the only legislative body with oversight of this law change, which will affect over 250,000 Wisconsinites directly and all of the taxpayers of this state.

Any briefing with ETF on matters before the committee should be done in public, in accordance with not just the letter but the spirit of the law, just like every other agency briefing before the Joint Committee on Finance. The revelation of this briefing causes us concern as duly appointed minority members of the committee, given the possibility that this is not the only meeting where only Republican members were invited.

Please understand that we are always interested in working for the betterment of this state, but cannot condone agency briefings that are not open to the public and to all members of the committee in both spirit and law.

Sincerely,

JON ERPENBACH
State Senator
27th Senate District

GORDON HINTZ
State Representative
54th Assembly District

LENA TAYLOR
State Senator
4th Senate District

KATRINA SHANKLAND
State Representative
71st Assembly District