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Go Slow on Foxxconn
New technologies could make human workers obsolete

(Madison)—State Senator Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay) said today that Wisconsin should be extremely cautious in any use of taxpayer dollars to lure Foxxconn to the state citing concerns that new technologies could eliminate any promised jobs.

“Given recent accounts of how its workers are treated and Foxxconn’s strategy of getting every last nickel and dime it can from taxpayers to lower their costs, Governor Walker and any legislator thinking of supporting what could be a \$3 billion incentive package should be very wary,” said Hansen. “To do otherwise would be a serious case of legislative malpractice.

Hansen was referring to news reports that described workers at one Foxxconn plant committing suicide because of the dire working conditions and more recent reports that Foxxconn is in the process of a 3-stage strategy to fully automate its manufacturing plants. To that end Foxxconn has recently replaced 60,000 workers at a plant in China with robots.

“Based on the rate of technological change in the workplace and Foxxconn’s admitted plans to automate its plants is it a wise move for taxpayers to be on the hook for potentially billions of dollars to create jobs that may not even exist in five years?” Hansen asked.

Recent news reports say that Foxx conn has a three-stage plan for fully automating its manufacturing plants in China going so far as to use automation to reduce its electric bills by eliminating the need for lighting. Workers at their plants in China earn only \$3.25 an hour compared to promised wages up to \$25 at the proposed plant in Wisconsin.

“It is hard to believe that they are fully automating their plants in China to save \$3.25 an hour per employee and that they won’t do the same thing here where their hourly labor costs could be 8 to 9 times more. It makes no economic sense to build manufacturing plants in the U.S. let alone the Midwest where labor costs are so much higher unless they plan to eventually replace those jobs with machines. Before the Governor and legislators mortgage the future of Wisconsin taxpayers, possibly for decades, they should think very carefully about the long-term needs of the state rather than their own reelection.”

This would not be the first failed attempt by Republicans to throw tax dollars at a large corporation hoping to protect American jobs. Shortly after President Trump and now Vice President Mike Pence promised \$16 million to Carrier in Indiana the company announced it was planning to replace workers there with robots.

“There are countless warning signs that responsible politicians should pay attention to before committing the hard-earned tax dollars of our families to a company like Foxxconn that has no loyalty to our state or our nation. Anyone who is charged with protecting taxpayers and workers would be wise to proceed with extreme caution.”