



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on March 21, 2012

Outrage Grows After Wisconsin Democrats Sabotage Jobs

After every Democrat and one Republican in the Wisconsin Senate voted to kill a regulatory reform bill that would have brought thousands of desperately needed mining jobs to the state, outraged conservative activists and unemployed citizens vowed to turn the heat up. Not only do they plan to keep pushing the legislation, they are targeting two key legislators who opposed the measure for recall elections.

The bill would have reformed Wisconsin's complex and outdated mine permitting system, simplifying the process while retaining strict environmental controls. If it had passed, Florida-based Gogebic Taconite was planning to open an iron-ore mine in the economically depressed northern region of Wisconsin. But when the measure failed, the company pulled out.



"Senate rejection of the mining reforms in Assembly Bill 426 sends a clear message that Wisconsin will not welcome iron mining. We get the message," the company said in a statement. "GTac is ending plans to invest in a Wisconsin mine. We thank the many people who have supported our efforts."

According to analysts, the mine would have brought with it well over 500 jobs and eventually more than 2,000 — not including other jobs in manufacturing and services from Milwaukee in the southeast to small towns in the region in the north. The investment would have injected at least \$1.5 billion into the local economy, too.

Some environmentalists complained that the mine would have caused pollution, which the company, mine supporters, and analysts denied. Multiple government agencies would have been involved in ensuring that the operation was environmentally friendly. But environmentalism was used as a rallying cry by opponents of the venture nonetheless.

In the closely watched 16 to 17 vote on the measure earlier this month, GOP state Sen. Dale Schultz (pictured above) broke with his party and voted against the reform bill, infuriating fellow Republicans. And Democrat state Sen. Bob Jauch, who represents the area where the mine would have been established, also voted against the legislation despite a massive outcry by his constituents.

Now, they are both being targeted for recalls. The initial paperwork has already been filed by activists working with the Milwaukee-based group Citizens for Responsible Government.

"Throughout this process, we have heard Sen. Jauch say, 'I am for responsible mining,' while all along he meant 'I am for no mining in Wisconsin,'" said recall leader Shirl LaBarre, a former candidate for the Wisconsin assembly, noting that the prominent Democrat was ignoring his constituents and throwing them under the bus. "The political rhetoric spewed by Sen. Jauch is surpassed by no one."



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LaBarre said citizens are fed up with Sen. Jauch ignoring their plight. And, she added, support for the recall is widespread — concerned citizens have been reaching out to her for months about the issue. Slightly more than 15,000 signatures are needed to force a recall, and LaBarre is confident she can reach that in the two months allotted for the process.

Sen. Jauch, of course, downplayed the effort to eject him from the legislature, blasting his opponents as members of a “fringe group” that is against “good government” and the “common good.” “They don’t care about jobs or responsible mining policy,” he said in a [statement](#). “They just want to make sure they own the politics and control the person who represents the north.”

On Monday, the controversial Democrat sent a [letter](#) to Gov. Scott Walker expressing willingness to work on a compromise. He asked that the Governor set up a “bipartisan panel” including members of the state Assembly and Senate to continue negotiations. The Governor is reportedly reviewing the request.

The lone Republican to vote against the bill, Sen. Schultz, is in hot water with his constituents as well. He first sparked an outcry among conservatives last year by voting against legislation to [rein in government-sector unions](#) and [balance the state budget](#). But his vote against the mining bill was finally too much to endure, according to activists working to recall him.

“We’re looking for jobs in Wisconsin,” said recall leader Dan Curran. “We feel it was a vote because they didn’t want to give credit to Gov. Walker for [creating] jobs.”

More than a few analysts agreed, and even Gov. Walker suggested the votes against the mine bill were political retaliation to avoid giving him the perception of success in job creation. “Democrats and their allies continue to put politics before school children and before jobs,” said Walker spokesman Cullen Werwie. “Despite the support of private sector unions and repeated attempts at compromise, Democrats put politics before people and voted against reasonable reform and against jobs.”

The resentment against Gov. Walker resulted from a successful legislative battle last year curtailing the power of public-servant labor groups to demand ever-greater sums of taxpayer money. And critics of the effort to kill the mining reform bill said Democrats and the government-sector unions that finance their campaigns were willing to do anything — even kill jobs and private-sector union opportunities — to punish GOP leaders. The defeat of the legislation was more proof of that, according to analysts.

“What is happening in Wisconsin is an example of how corruption by powerful external forces can result in the betrayal by elected officials of both their morals and their constituents,” noted Frank Burke in a piece entitled “[Democrats Kill Wisconsin Jobs to Spite Governor Scott Walker](#)” for the *American Thinker*. “In Wisconsin, more has been lost than jobs and investment.”

According to pro-jobs activists in the state, Wisconsinites are still considering what measures to take to ensure that the legislature represents citizens — not special interests and Big Labor. There is still some disagreement about what would work best, but at least one candidate for federal office in Wisconsin agreed that recalls were an appropriate response.

“I would tell you there’s way more basis for that recall than anything that’s going on right now today,” said Republican candidate for U.S. Senate Mark Neumann. “I mean, they just killed how many thousands of jobs here in Wisconsin? If there ever is a reason for a recall, it would certainly be because they’re destroying job opportunities in this state.”

Sen. Schultz was more moderate and civilized than Jauch in his response to the efforts to oust him from



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the legislature. But he still criticized one of the main groups working on the campaign, [saying](#) the non-partisan CRG took pride in spending time in “other people’s pastures.”

“I think most legislators these days are fairly used to the notion of being recalled,” Schultz said, claiming he voted with his conscience. “I’ve represented the people out there for a long time. I think I know them well. I think they know me well. I’ll make my case like I always have.”

Gov. Walker, while distancing himself from the recall efforts, said — until recently, at least — that he hoped a compromise could be found on the mining legislation. If the reforms eventually passed, he said the mining company might have been willing to reconsider its decision to pull out.

“That’s why, in the end, my hope is not just one, but maybe two or three senators, who realize in the end you still have a process that has plenty of steps for environmental protections, clean air, clean land, clean water,” he [said](#).

A few analysts have essentially pronounced the reform bill dead, especially now that the legislative session is over. And a spokesman for the mining company said it was already exploring options in Michigan instead.

“Wisconsin should reform its own mining laws for Wisconsin’s own sake, and then they should recruit companies that would come and invest and create jobs here,” spokesman Bob Seitz [told](#) Wisconsin Public Radio. “Mining is the only sector of manufacturing that is growing in this country and Wisconsin is missing it.”

Multiple recall efforts are already ongoing targeting several state Senators, Gov. Walker, and Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch. A series of [expensive recall elections](#) last year [failed](#) to hand Democrats a majority in the state Senate, but “Big Labor” has not given up the fight.

After losing some [highly controversial tax-funded privileges](#) in the state, union bosses [fear](#) the taxpayer victory could spark a nationwide trend as state governments struggle to pay the bills — especially public servants’ generous pensions. As such, unions have made Wisconsin’s reform-minded officials their main targets.

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