

Why Scott Walker's Claims are Bogus

Written by Democratic Party of Wisconsin
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<http://www.newprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/scottwalker-dream-279h.jpg>



As the special election to remove him from office nears, **Scott Walker** has been running around the State trying to sell the illusion that his far-right agenda for Wisconsin “is working”. But **what is the truth** behind how some **of his claims on property taxes, school “reforms”, and the elimination of collective bargaining are really working?**

MADISON - Following last Thursday's release of another round of disappointing jobs numbers that bring Scott Walker's total job loss to 10,200, Walker has gone into overdrive trying to find a silver lining in his job-killing dark cloud.

On social media and a self-serving tour of the state, starting this morning with right-wing hack Charlie Sykes, Scott Walker is making the claim that his “reforms” have saved Wisconsin taxpayers \$1 billion.

Do the numbers add up? Of course not. Like pretty much everything else Scott Walker says, this claim is a distortion of reality that is a blatant attempt to distract from Walker's real record of failure and dishonesty.

Scott Walker Says:

1. Property Taxes are Down

According to a memo released by the state Department of Revenue, statewide property taxes dropped by 0.4%, or \$11 for the median-valued home, in 2011.

However, the total net property tax levy increased by 0.2%.

Scott Walker of course claims the decrease as his victory, but fails to mention that, under his job-loss economy, the average Wisconsin home fell 2.2% in value for property tax purposes. For the average homeowner that is a nearly \$3,500 drop in value, for an \$11 savings.

Another key point, recently noted in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, is that \$4 of the \$11 one-year drop in the property tax bill is attributable to an increase in lottery sales.

2. “Reforms” Are Working in Wisconsin School Districts

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[New data released by the Department of Public Instruction](#) in totality refutes distorted statements Walker himself has made about how his educational "reforms" are working.

The alarming key findings of the report include proof that Walker's cuts have caused:

- 73 percent of school districts in the state reported cutting teachers this year
- The 1,446 teacher position cuts represents a 75 percent increase over similar reductions made last year
- 74 percent of school districts to cut staff, including the largest, exorbitant cuts made to reading, special education, career and technical education teachers

The reckless cuts by Walker's knife were mitigated in part this year thanks to \$82.3 million in funds provided by the Obama administration to offset such cuts on the state level: ***That money will not be available next year.***

To be sure, some school districts did save some money. But any isolated so-called "success stories" come as a result of record retirements, larger class sizes, reduced benefits and planning periods for teachers and staff, federal funding and a one-time savings from the increase in employee health care and retirement contributions that will not be available next year.

The burden of savings has been heaped on the backs of public employees, many of whom are actually taking home less pay now than they did four or five years ago. Further, they are getting less value for benefits they are paying more to receive.

When employers save money on the health benefit plans they offer their employees, there is a corresponding decrease in the benefit offered. So in addition to requiring that public employees pay a higher percentage into their health care benefits, Scott Walker's "reforms" have led to plans that provide a lesser benefit, with higher co-pays, deductibles and co-insurance. This "savings" clearly just shifts more costs to public employees, who in turn have less purchasing power in their communities.

3. No Tax or Fee Increases

Scott Walker says he didn't raise taxes. If you are a wealthy corporation or a super-rich donor to Walker's campaign you might benefit from his \$93.8 million tax cut for those who least need help.

The Legislative Fiscal Bureau projects that Scott Walker's tax giveaways will cost Wisconsin [more than \\$2.3 billion](#) in lost revenue over the next ten years. Most of these losses are a result of changes in Capital Gains and Combined Reporting – which benefit the highest wage earners and largest

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corporations in Wisconsin. To pay for those giveaways, Walker raised taxes on seniors and working families by nearly \$70 million. These increases include a \$14 million increase by reducing the Homestead Tax Credit, affecting 247,000 homeowners and renters, and a \$56.2 million increase on low-wage workers with children as a result of cuts to the Earned Income Tax Credit.

In addition to raising taxes, [Walker's budget also increased fees by more than \\$133 million](#), \$106 million of which came in the form of UW System tuition increases, making it harder for working families to afford college.

4. The Department of Corrections has reduced overtime costs by over \$2 million in just three months compared to the previous year.

Following Scott Walker's unconstitutional "budget repair" bill that stripped collective bargaining rights from teachers, nurses and prison guards, and his draconian budget that left critical programs underfunded, public employees retired in record numbers.

Now, under Scott Walker, the Department of Corrections has 209 vacant prison guard positions - nearly double the 118 vacancies two years ago - causing overtime costs to increase by 18% in 2011. [According to a spokesperson for the Department of Corrections, the increase in vacant positions accounted for \\$1.2 million in extra overtime in fiscal year 2011.](#)

It's Not Working

Scott Walker has doled out \$2.3 billion in tax giveaways for millionaires and out-of-state corporations at the same time raising taxes on seniors and working families by nearly \$70 million, increasing fees by more than \$133 million and slashing \$2.6 billion from public education.

Despite Scott Walker's claims that "It's Working," Wisconsin still leads the nation in job loss, property values have fallen, our children have nearly 1,500 fewer teachers in the classroom and our prisons have fewer corrections officers. By no measurable standard of any value to working families can Scott Walker's failed economic policies be perceived as "working."