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Partisan Politics is Costing Wisconsin

In the last decade, it has become evident that for many politicians, furthering the interests of their political party takes priority over the needs of people they represent. Wisconsin has lost out on an incredible amount of money simply because one side did not want to give the other side what could possibly be seen as a “victory.” It is a terrible way to run a state, and it must stop. We have to put people over power.

A [2011 report from the Wisconsin Budget Project](#) described \$1.3 billion dollars that Wisconsin declined to receive. These funds we missed out on included: \$480.3 million in Medical Assistance funds; \$13.2 million for job training programs for the disabled; \$8.3 million for child support enforcement; \$4.2 million for Medical Assistance and Food Share Administration; \$780 million in high-speed rail grants; and \$23 million in broadband infrastructure grants for schools and libraries.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an unprecedented increase in unemployment claims. Shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic started, [Wisconsin lost out on \\$25 million dollars](#) of federal money meant to help with paying unemployment because the legislature was too slow to act and pass legislation even after legislative leaders were warned early on that delaying legislation meant that Wisconsin may miss out on the funds.

Recently, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimated that [Wisconsin would lose out on \\$1.6 billion](#) in savings if we continue to refuse to expand Medicaid- something that 38 other states have already done. A measure that would save the state more than a billion dollars *and* insure more Wisconsinites seems like a no brainer- and, indeed, it is something that [70% of Wisconsin residents support](#). They are, however, currently being stymied by just one person- Republican Speaker of the Assembly Robin Vos. He has decided to single-handedly cost Wisconsin \$1.6 billion dollars and prevent more people from having potentially life-saving insurance.

This is irresponsible governing, and leaders in this state must make more of an effort to do what is right for our constituents. Legislators have to be able to put their pride aside and realize that state and country should come before their party. What motivates people to run for office? It should not be for the accumulation of power for the sake of having power. It should be to better the lives of the people they represent. We must recognize that and become a government of, by, and **for** the people.

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