



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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## NEWS RELEASE

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## Zipperer and Montgomery Push for Joint Committee on Finance Oversight Hearings of Stimulus Data

*Assembly Committee on Jobs refuses efforts for jobs oversight.*

**Madison**—At an afternoon hearing of the Assembly Committee on Jobs, the Economy and Small Business today, Representative Rich Zipperer (R-Pewaukee) continued his push for the Committee to hold oversight hearings on stimulus spending accountability, only to be denied by the Chair of the Committee, Rep. Louis Molepske, Jr. (D-Stevens Point). In response, Zipperer and Rep. Phil Montgomery (R-Ashwaubenon) joined efforts today in urging the Joint Committee on Finance to take up the cause of oversight in Wisconsin. Zipperer is the ranking Republican of the Committee on Jobs, the Economy and Small Business and Montgomery is a member of the Joint Committee on Finance.

**“Wisconsin taxpayers deserve to know how billions of their tax dollars are being spent, and they deserve to know what results those expenditures are achieving,”** said Zipperer. **“Since the Committee on Jobs seems unwilling to take up this responsibility of jobs oversight, Representative Montgomery and I will now continue pushing this cause to the Joint Committee on Finance.”**

News accounts the last several weeks by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* and others have drawn attention to multiple errors and exaggerations in the reports released by the White House of the number of jobs supposedly created by the federal stimulus spending, including jobs allegedly created in non-existent Wisconsin Congressional Districts. Zipperer and Montgomery have been advocating for legislative oversight of the stimulus spending results since the data became available in early October, and Assembly Republicans have called for enhanced legislative oversight of the stimulus program since January.

**“This should be a no-brainer. We’re simply trying to provide taxpayers with accurate data,”** said Montgomery. **“I hope the Democrats will change their minds on this issue, and soon. As legislators, it is our duty to do all we can to ensure tax dollars are being spent appropriately, and that includes oversight on the results of stimulus dollars that are flowing through our state.”**

In Wisconsin, Governor Doyle’s Office of Recovery and Reinvestment (ORR) is charged with distributing and monitoring the federal stimulus spending. ORR’s own website states that “Wisconsin is moving federal recovery funds to create jobs for hardworking people in the state while ensuring that the use of funds is open, transparent and accountable.” The website further states that the state will:

- Report on the use of recovery funds in Wisconsin for every program and project;
- Ensure the funds are used appropriately as defined by the law;
- Provide the number of jobs that were created or saved by the funds.

(more...)

**“Clearly the onus of accountability falls on the State of Wisconsin by ORR’s own admission,”** concluded Zipperer. **“Governor Doyle and legislative Democrats were happy to grandstand on the number of jobs supposedly created by the stimulus spending last month; now they won’t help verify the accuracy of that data. There’s simply no reason why the Jobs Committee or the Joint Committee on Finance couldn’t hold oversight hearings yet this month.”**

Zipperer and Montgomery also noted that even U.S. Congressman Dave Obey seems to understand the need for accurate accounting of the results of the stimulus spending. Obey was quoted in the Huffington Post and elsewhere the last several days demanding the White House correct the mistakes contained within the jobs reports, saying “Credibility counts in government and stupid mistakes like this undermine it. We've got too many serious problems in this country to let that happen. Whether the numbers are good news or bad news, I want the honest numbers and I want them now.”

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### **Timeline of Stimulus Oversight Attempts**

**January 27:** Assembly Republicans introduced AJR 3, which would create a bipartisan committee on stimulus spending oversight. AJR 3 has not been voted on by the Democrat majority.

**February 18:** Assembly Republicans offered amendments 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 to the so-called state stimulus spending bill to bring enhanced legislative oversight to the stimulus spending. Each was denied by the Democrat majority.

**March 17:** ORR appeared before the Assembly Committee on Jobs, the Economy and Small Business to discuss the stimulus spending. When pushed by Rep. Zipperer on accountability, the ORR witnesses stated that they were in the process of putting in place a independent third-party to analyze and provide verified results to the stimulus spending, and that the results of that analysis would be placed online.

**October:** The White House reports on the number of jobs created began to be picked apart by media throughout the country, including the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Multiple errors are found.

**October 13:** At a Joint Finance Committee 13.10 meeting, Rep. Montgomery asked for a report from ORR on the jobs data.

**October 29:** Rep. Zipperer brought a *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article on the erroneous jobs reports to the attention of the Assembly Committee on Jobs, the Economy and Small Business and requested further oversight.

**November 3:** At the Joint Finance Committee executive session on Wisconsin Shares Legislation, Rep. Montgomery asked the co-chairs for a hearing on the jobs data.

**November 11:** Rep. Zipperer formally requested that the Assembly Committee on Jobs, the Economy and Small Business hold oversight hearings.

**November 19:** Rep. Zipperer asked Chairman Molepske during a public hearing of the Assembly Committee on Jobs, the Economy and Small Business if he will convene the Committee in the near future to hold oversight hearings. Chairman Molepske would not commit to the request.

**November 19:** Reps. Zipperer and Montgomery formally request a public hearing on the jobs data by the Joint Committee on Finance.