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## **Republicans Add Second Public Affairs School at UW-Madison** *Speaker, Majority Leader create Institute for Safe Spaces*

Madison – Governor Walker and Legislative Republicans announced the creation of a second school of public affairs at the University of Wisconsin–Madison on Tuesday. The 2017-19 state budget proposal provides \$1.5 million a year for the Tommy G. Thompson Center for Public Leadership to be opened next fall. UW Chancellor Rebecca Blank said that the Thompson Center would be based on the same principles as the existing Robert M. LaFollette School of Public Affairs: objective and professional public policy research, faculty involvement in discussion and public life, and promotion of the Wisconsin Idea.

Assembly Speaker Robin Vos said the Thompson Center’s mission would facilitate research, leadership training, and bring speakers and public events to campus. Of the \$1.5 million annual budget, \$500,000 would go towards sponsoring speakers across UW System campuses. It is unclear how the new Thompson Center would incorporate Speaker Vos’s bill that requires universities to stay neutral on public policy controversies.

*“It seems that when science and objective research does not support the ideological view of the Wisconsin Republicans they feel the need to make their own space. Data and research should be the driving force behind evidence-based policy. Not only are Republicans trying to pass bills crushing free speech, they are giving themselves a \$3 million safe space.”*

*“Governor Tommy Thompson worked with UW faculty on a regular basis. In fact, he utilized the existing LaFollette School of Public Affairs on at least two commissions studying complex policy issues. It is baffling to me that Wisconsin has an existing public affairs school that receives only \$600,000 a year in state funding, and yet the GOP’s feels the need to spend \$1.5 million a year to pursue their own truths.”*

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