

Let's "Benchmark" Scott Walker – You be the Judge!

"Benchmarking" compares where projects are to where you expect them to be. Professional rating organizations regularly benchmark the movement of our economy. So let's benchmark Republican Governor Scott Walker's efforts to get Wisconsin's economic house in order and Democrat Governor Pat Quinn's efforts in Illinois.

Moody's has praised Wisconsin Scott Walker's performance as "credit positive for Wisconsin." Adding, "The money-saving reforms bring Wisconsin's finances closer to the structural budgetary balance." As a result, Wisconsin jumped in the Chief Executive magazine's 2011 ranking of each state's business climate- moving to 17th from 41st while Illinois dropped to 48th from 45th as ranked by the nation's top CEOs.

An article in the 1/20/12 Wall Street Journal refers to Illinois as the "Greece Next Door" pointing out they received a Moody's credit downgrade from A1 to A2, the lowest among the 50 states. "That's worse than Democrat controlled California. Illinois cost of borrowing for \$800 million of new 10-year general obligation bonds rose to 3.1%-which is 110 basis points higher than the 2% on top-rated 10 year bonds of more financially secure states." The article goes on to say, "This wasn't supposed to happen. Only a year ago, Governor Pat Quinn and his fellow Democrats raised individual income taxes by 67% and the corporate tax rate by 46%." They did it to raise \$7 billion in revenue, as the Governor put it, to "Get Illinois back on fiscal sound footing and improve the state's credit rating." In contrast to the praise given Wisconsin's Scott Walker, Moody's criticized Illinois lawmakers for "a legislative session in which the state took no steps to implement lasting solutions to its severe pension underfunding or to its chronic bill payment delays." An analysis by Bloomberg found that the assets in the pension fund would only cover "45% of projected liabilities, the least of any state and in part because the tax increases caused companies to leave Illinois. The state budget office confessed that as of January the state still "had \$6.8 billion in unpaid bills and unaddressed obligations."

Being a former OPEIU #39 member, I'm frustrated by the union's relentless criticism of Walker while they ignore all he's doing to protect their jobs and attract employers to our state. We're all tired of funding their recall efforts. And now their Democrat' candidate Kathleen Falk has pledged not to sign any bill until Walker' reforms have been repealed. That's akin to throwing us all under the bus to please the unions.

There is hope! As recall advocates realized union bosses were paid 4 to 8 times more than their Governor they've gotten mad. When it came time for them to recertify their union contracts, they needed multiply ballots to convince 51% of their membership to vote yes. And according to the DNC's own web blog, party faithful are abandoning ship before "union endorsed Kathleen Falk digs our economy back into the hole in which Illinois taxpayers live."

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