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Wisconsin News and Sports

Risser calls capitol chaos unprecedented

by [Jackie Johnson](#) on February 25, 2011

in [Budget](#)

One of the missing Democrats calls what's going on in Madison a "tragic situation."

State Senator Fred Risser (D-Madison), one of the 14 senate Democrats who fled the state to avoid a vote, comments on the chaos in the capitol following a vote on Governor Walker's budget repair bill in the Assembly in the wee hours of the morning. "From what I hear the Republicans submitted to a little trickery to final get out the vote."

After nearly 61 hours, Assembly Republicans abruptly cut off debate on the measure and forced a vote. The Democrats were outraged, scrambling about the chamber screaming "no" and "shame, shame."

The longest-serving state legislator in the country has some perspective. Risser — first elected in 1956 — says, via telephone from Illinois, he hasn't seen this much tension at the capitol in all his years. "This is unprecedented. There was never a time in Wisconsin history that we have seen the type of reaction that we have seen on this case," he says, "I thought I had seen just about everything ... it's a precedent which I hope is never repeated."

Risser says the political chaos is having a negative effect on the economy, saying an "attitude of fear" seems to be taking over and he says "that's tragic." While Risser agrees both sides of the political aisle can be blamed for the standoff, he puts the biggest responsibility on the governor for his "uncompromising attitude."

Meanwhile, the senate moved the bill passed the amendable stage. The chamber needs one Democrat for a quorum before members can vote to pass the bill. Governor Walker is urging the absent Dems to return to "avoid dire consequences."

[AUDIO: Jackie Johnson report 1:47](#)

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[1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#)

[6](#) [7](#) [8](#) [9](#) [10](#) [11](#) [12](#)

[13](#) [14](#) [15](#) [16](#) [17](#) [18](#) [19](#)

[20](#) [21](#) [22](#) [23](#) [24](#) [25](#) [26](#)

[27](#) [28](#)

[« Jan](#)

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