

Walker's Presidential Dream Incurs More State Travel Security Costs

Written by GBP Staff

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WISDOT must give retroactive overtime pay dating back to 2013 to nine Wisconsin State Patrol officers who served as bodyguards for Gov. Scott Walker on the presidential campaign trail, according to federal officials. Greater accountability needed on Walker's campaign-related travel say Democrats.

MADISON - According to a [report](#) by WKOW Channel 27 News in Madison Friday, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) is requiring the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WISDOT) to award retroactive overtime pay dating back to May 19, 2013 to nine Wisconsin State Patrol officers who serve as bodyguards for Gov. Scott Walker and other state dignitaries.

Those officers comprise the state's Dignitary Protection Unit (DPU), which provides security for Walker 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That includes his protection on the presidential campaign trail. Since the State Patrol is a division of WISDOT, the officers are paid out of that agency's budget.

Rhonda Burke, a USDOL spokesperson in Chicago, said WISDOT would receive a written version of the decision soon. But Burke did not yet know if the decision was handed out in response to a complaint. Officials have not yet determined how much it will cost state taxpayers.



Assembly Democratic Leader **Peter Barca** (D-Kenosha), who serves on the State's Joint Committee on Employment Relations (JCOER), was quick to respond to the ruling.

"The men and women serving in Wisconsin's Dignitary Protection Unit put their lives on the line every day and they deserve fair compensation for their work," Barca said. "These law enforcement officers are particularly strained by the demands of traveling across the country and world to protect Gov. Walker as he runs for president."

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The cost for Gov. Walker's security detail jumped from \$1.6 million in 2011 to \$2.4 million in 2014. The out-of-state portion of that 2014 tab was \$89,454, a number which is expected to jump up exponentially in 2015 with his run for the GOP presidential nomination.

"I am deeply concerned that at a time when Republicans have slashed our schools, universities and roads, taxpayers are footing the bill for Gov. Walker to pander to Republican primary voters," said Barca. "That's why I support our efforts to promote transparency and swift repayment of all travel and security costs associated with the Governor's presidential campaign."



In a related event last Monday, Assembly Democratic Assistant Leader **Katrina Shankland** (D-Stevens Point) and Sen.

Dave Hansen

(D-Green Bay)

[unveiled](#)

a plan to make State politicians, including Walker, pay for such self-serving campaign trips. Under their plan, any state elected official who is running for, or even considering, higher office must submit a monthly travel form with the Government Accountability Board that explains what costs were incurred and who paid for them. Any campaign costs incurred by taxpayers would have to be reimbursed in a timely manner.

"The Governor's attempt to save money on his skyrocketing travel costs at the expense of the brave men and women charged with protecting him is yet another reason we need greater accountability with respect to his campaign-related travel," added Sen. Hansen in response to the latest news. "The taxpayers deserve not only transparency on this issue, they deserve to be reimbursed for those costs just as the men and women who provide his security deserve to be fairly compensated for their work."