



Republicans in the Wisconsin Senate voted Wednesday night to strip nearly all collective bargaining rights from public workers after discovering a way to bypass the chamber's missing Democrats.

All 14 Senate Democrats fled to Illinois nearly three weeks ago, preventing the chamber from having enough members present to consider Gov. Scott Walker's so-called "budget repair bill" — a proposal introduced to plug a \$137 million budget shortfall.

The Senate requires a quorum to take up any measures that spend money. But Republicans on Wednesday split from the legislation the proposal to curtail union rights, which spends no money, and a special conference committee of state lawmakers approved the bill a short time later.

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