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BUDGET BATTLE

Democrats flee state to avoid vote on budget bill

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Mark Hoffman

Protesters bang on the doors to the Senate chamber Thursday as thousands of people pack the Capitol to demonstrate against Gov. Scott Walker's budget repair proposal. Action on the bill was delayed when Senate Democrats left the state.

Protests go on; GOP vows to try again

By Bill Glauber, Jason Stein and Patrick Marley of the Journal Sentinel

Feb. 17, 2011 | (3208) COMMENTS

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State budget debate: 2/17

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Video



Madison — Amid the third straight day of chaotic but largely peaceful protests at the Capitol, Democratic senators Thursday boycotted a Senate vote on Gov. Scott Walker's budget-repair plan, forcing Republicans to put off further action in that house until Friday at the earliest.

With Democrats hiding out just over the Illinois border and drawing national media attention, Republicans had too few lawmakers to take a vote Thursday and had to adjourn. With thousands of demonstrators swarming the Capitol Square, GOP lawmakers vowed to come back Friday morning to try to take up the proposal, which would help solve a state budget shortfall by cutting public employee benefits and would also take away most public union bargaining rights.

Democrats holed up in the Clock Tower Resort and Conference Center in Rockford, Ill., while Republicans said they wanted law enforcement to bring them to the Capitol if they were still in Wisconsin. Walker called for Democrats to call off their "stunt" and "show up and do the job they're paid to do."

"It's either a matter of making reductions and making modest requests

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