



S&L Motors
"S&L Sells For Less!"
[LEARN MORE](#)

0% FOR 75 MOS and \$3,500 OFF MSRP
*See store for details

2015 JEEP



Gov. Walker defends travel expenses

By [Steve Schuster \(http://wbay.com/author/wbaysschuster/\)](http://wbay.com/author/wbaysschuster/)

Published: October 10, 2015, 3:11 pm | Updated: October 14, 2015, 9:55 pm



Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker (R) used \$147,000 of taxpayer dollars to pay for international travel expenses including [trips to Europe \(https://www.scribd.com/doc/284334673/Gov-Walker-s-travel-expenses-to-Europe\)](https://www.scribd.com/doc/284334673/Gov-Walker-s-travel-expenses-to-Europe) and Canada. The money was spent on flights, hotels, transportation, parking, telecommunications, hospitality gifts, networking events, and meals, according to documents obtained by Action 2 News from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC).

At the time, Walker's Administration said the purpose of the trips to the UK, France, Spain, Germany and [Canada \(https://www.scribd.com/doc/284334786/Gov-Walker-Canada-travel-](https://www.scribd.com/doc/284334786/Gov-Walker-Canada-travel-)

expenses) was for international trade missions to stimulate Wisconsin's economy.

However, questions remain.

"Is this the real cost? I'm sure a lot of people are skeptical of the real total cost to Wisconsin taxpayers," said Carrie Springer, Communications Director for the Wisconsin Democratic Party.

"The Walker Administration has repeatedly tried to keep the press and the public from getting public records. Many people will question whether this is even the true total cost," Springer added.

In July of 2015, the Walker administration said the public has no right to access records that had previously been deemed public and recently supported legislation to overhaul Wisconsin's open records laws (<http://wbay.com/2015/07/30/records-tie-walkers-office-to-bill-gutting-open-records-law/>) to limit transparency. (<http://wbay.com/2015/10/10/gov-walkers-travel-expenses-leave-unanswered-questions/>)

Back in 2010, Wisconsin taxpayers spent \$657,458 on then Governor Jim Doyle's (D) security. Compare that number to 2014, when taxpayers have spent \$2.4 million on Gov. Walker's security costs, according to Department of Administration data.

During the first portion of 2015, Gov. Walker spent an additional \$125,000 of taxpayer money on his security detail for his international travel. Walker has promised to repay taxpayers for the full amount. To date, his Political Action Committee (PAC) has repaid \$58,000.

"The governor charged over \$125,000 to Wisconsin taxpayers as he jet-setted around ... running for president, and he hasn't even paid half of that back. Before the governor pays another nickel to a campaign consultant or vendor, the people of Wisconsin should be reimbursed immediately," said State Rep. Katrina Shankland.

Shankland along with Sen. David Hansen (D) have recently introduced legislation that would promote taxpayer transparency (<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/democrats/news/2015-press-releases/proposal-to-protect-wisconsin-taxpayers/>).

The bill would require state officials who are even considering running for higher office to submit a monthly travel form with the Government Accountability Board. Candidates would be required to detail costs incurred and who paid for them. The form would include basic details such as a travel itinerary and itemized lists of expenses, including travel and security costs.

"I call on my Republican colleagues to hold a public hearing on my bill to end this abuse of taxpayer dollars," said Shankland.

In July, [Walker called for the dismantling of the Government Accountability Board.](http://www.wkow.com/story/29587052/2015/07/20/walker-calls-for-dismantling-of-state-elections-board) (<http://www.wkow.com/story/29587052/2015/07/20/walker-calls-for-dismantling-of-state-elections-board>) On Oct. 7, calling the board "a failed experiment," [Wisconsin Republicans have attempted to restructure the GAB](http://wbay.com/ap/republicans-to-introduce-bill-reforming-elections-board/) (<http://wbay.com/ap/republicans-to-introduce-bill-reforming-elections-board/>) from a non-partisan regulatory board to a divided, partisan system.

While Wisconsin Democrats question the total Walker spent, additional question remains regarding Walker's timing of the travel, prior to a bid for the White House.

"This was about promoting Walker's personal political ambitions, not Wisconsin. There's clearly a pattern of behavior. Walker tends to mix official state business with campaigning," said Michael Browne Deputy Director of One Wisconsin Now, a liberal government watchdog group.

During an interview with Action 2 News, Matthew Crenson a Johns Hopkins University Political Science Professor Emeritus said Walker's travel expenses on taxpayer dollars are extreme.

"It seems excessive. What results does he [Walker] have to show for this extraordinary amount of money spent? If he wants to justify the expenditure, he better have answers," Crenson said.

On Oct. 14, Action 2 News received a written response from the Walker administration, defending the governor's travel expenses.

"These trade missions were official trips and allowed our delegation to make a strong case to overseas companies about why they should consider establishing new operations in Wisconsin or providing additional capital to help Wisconsin businesses," said Gov. Walker's Press Secretary Laurel Patrick in a written statement.

"These trips have resulted in increased interest and ongoing conversations between staff and foreign companies," Patrick added.

According to Patrick, The [UK trip](http://inwisconsin.com/press_releases/wisconsin-delegation-returns-home-united-kingdom-trade-mission/) (http://inwisconsin.com/press_releases/wisconsin-delegation-returns-home-united-kingdom-trade-mission/) had the primary purpose of attracting future foreign direct investment in Wisconsin.

"The focus was to increase awareness of Wisconsin as a destination for European Union companies

and investors, and to increase the number of prospective companies and investors seeking entry or expansion of their business in Wisconsin," she said.

The European and Canadian trips focused on international expansion and increasing exports for the state, Patrick said, noting that Walker met one-on-one and attended "targeted events for accompanying state companies."

The Walker Administration says the trip will be a boon to Wisconsin's economy, with the following accomplishments:

- The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health signed a memorandum of understanding with the German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases to collaborate on research efforts aimed at slowing the onset of Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and other neurodegenerative diseases.
- The Water Council and WEDC signed an agreement with Veolia, a multinational company headquartered in Paris, to collaborate on a competition program for innovators and entrepreneurs in water technology.
- The delegation met in Montpellier with more than 30 French business leaders in the bioscience and water technology sectors as part of a "Doing Business in Wisconsin" event.
- Saint-Gobain is an \$11 million project, which developed during the planning of Governor Walker's trade mission to Europe and will be completed during the first half of 2016. The company will add 48,000 square feet of manufacturing and warehousing space and will make upgrades to the current facility, which currently has about 300 employees. This marks the company's [fourth expansion \(http://inwisconsin.com/press_releases/saint-gobain/#sthash.EnFV1kvf.dpuf\)](http://inwisconsin.com/press_releases/saint-gobain/#sthash.EnFV1kvf.dpuf) in Portage in the last decade.

"[Walker's] staff [will] continue to talk and follow up on the connections made during those trips," Patrick added.

WBAY.com

© Copyright 2000 - 2015 Young Broadcasting of Green Bay, Inc. A Media General Company.

Powered by WordPress.com VIP (<https://vip.wordpress.com/>)

5