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**INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Indiana House Democrats could soon get hit with \$1,000-a-day fines for stalling legislative work over a divisive labor bill.**

**House Democratic Leader Patrick Bauer said Thursday that Republican House Speaker Brian Bosma promised to begin fining Democrats on Friday under a new law designed to keep them from blocking business after a five-week walkout last year.**

**"It's a significant issue. We think it's another assault against free speech," Bauer said Thursday as he walked into a private meeting of the House Democrats.**

**But Bosma said he had not decided whether to begin implementing the fines Friday and that no legal paperwork had been started.**

**"We're just counting on folks having some common sense and showing up for work eventually," Bosma said.**

**Democrats stalled business Wednesday, the first day of the 2012 session, when they did not report to the House floor. That blocked consideration of a right-to-work measure that would make Indiana the first state in more than a decade to bar private unions from collecting mandatory fees.**

**Democrats met again Thursday but did not say how long they planned to stall. Instead, Bauer said, they are debating whether to hold public hearings on the proposal around the state as soon as this weekend.**

**But when Bosma took a roll call of House members Thursday afternoon, four Democrats had joined the 60 Republicans. Three more Democrats, for a total of 67 lawmakers, are needed to conduct business.**

**The new law levies a fine of \$1,000 per day against each lawmaker who sits out more than three days in a row. Republicans established the new penalties after Democrats left the state last year to block the right-to-work measure.**

**Representatives filing into the Democratic caucus meeting Thursday said they would withstand the fines, which could reach into the tens of thousands of dollars depending on how long they stay away.**

**The House Democratic caucus meanwhile opened an account on the Democratic fundraising website ActBlue and sent out an appeal Wednesday on Facebook seeking donations of between \$5 and \$250. "The Indiana House Democrats NEED YOUR HELP! Please support our caucus as we fight another battle against the**

Republicans as they try to push RTW legislation through without listening to working Hoosiers," the Democrats wrote in their appeal.

Indiana Democratic Party spokeswoman Jen Wagner said her group did not pay for any of the penalties accrued last year and did not plan to pay any fines this year.

A lawsuit challenging fines from last year's session filed by Rep. Bill Crawford, D-Indianapolis, is still being weighed by a Marion County Superior Court judge.