



## For Immediate Release

December 20, 2017

## For More Information, Contact:

Rep. Chris Taylor, 608-266-5342

## Republican Leaders continue their retaliatory campaign against Corruption probes

MADISON – This week, Republican leaders signaled their continuation of a retaliatory campaign against public officials and entities involved with several corruption investigations. One of these bipartisan corruption investigations (“John Doe I”) resulted in six criminal convictions, including two aides of then-Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker who were campaigning on state time. Leaked documents to *The Guardian* newspaper revealed that this initial investigation expanded into uncovering typically illegal campaign collusion between Governor Scott Walker and a so-called “independent group,” the Wisconsin Club for Growth (“John Doe II”) during the recall elections. The leaked documents also outline how Governor Walker evaded long-established campaign finance laws prohibiting candidates from receiving direct or indirect corporate campaign contributions. This second investigation was shut down before it got off the ground by a partisan state Supreme Court that ignored state and federal campaign finance legal precedent and issued an outlier decision.

After a year of investigating the source of these leaked documents, earlier this month Attorney General Brad Schimel, in an 88-page right-wing rant, found no criminal violations and no specific leaker, but still is urging a court to find various public officials involved with the investigations in contempt.

In response, Rep. Chris Taylor issued the following statement:

“In the spirit of this holiday season, here are 12 signs that while Republican leaders turn a blind eye to corruption, they engage in a retaliatory witch hunt against individuals and entities charged with enforcing accountability measures.

1. The GOP’s concern with identifying *The Guardian* leaker, rather than the underlying criminal and unethical conduct at the heart of the documents released by *The Guardian*.
2. Attorney General Schimel’s partisan, half-baked December 6<sup>th</sup> report where he fails to find criminal activities associated with *The Guardian* leaks. But he insists of throwing a lot of wet noodles at the wall, with the hopes that SOMEBODY will be found in contempt of court.
3. In the process of Attorney General Schimel inability to find ANYONE who committed a crime or violated a secrecy order, he violates a secrecy order in disclosing an old ethics investigation that didn’t result in charges, exposing the identifies of 35 people.
4. Attorney General Schimel’s refusal to investigate admitted leaker and conservative Eric O’Keefe who acknowledge consistent violations of a court ordered secrecy order.
5. The Republican majority on Wisconsin Supreme Court’s decision to shut down the John Doe II corruption investigation, interpreting Wisconsin’s campaign finance law in a way that contradicts established legal precedent;

6. The dismantling of the GAB, a non-partisan, independent watchdog agency responsible for holding politicians accountable, in favor of two partisan commissions that have previously failed to hold elected officials accountable.
7. The rewriting of Wisconsin's campaign finance laws to allow more corporate money in our elections and less public disclosure;
8. Exempting legislators from any future, secret corruption investigations;
9. Calling for the resignations of the administrators of the Elections and Ethics commissions 10 months before a major election;
10. Governor Walker eliminating needed positions at the state Elections Commission to safeguard our elections against cyberattacks, despite federal funding available for these positions;
11. Senator Leah Vukmir, at past American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) conferences, disparaging independent corruption investigations and the entities legally authorized to conduct them.
12. Senator Leah Vukmir demurring when asked about Attorney General Schimel's unlawful public disclosure about a confidential investigation while she lambasts the GAB and calls for public employees to resign.

"I continue to be disgusted by the blatant political attacks that Republican leaders launch against public servants trying to do their jobs, while not blinking an eye at the underlying unlawful conduct that necessitated these corruption investigations in the first place. Their actions are sending a message that anyone or any entity that dares investigate them better think twice. What the public should take note of is that the GOP's absolute power is corrupting absolutely."