



# DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF WISCONSIN

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Wednesday, June 3, 2009

JB Van Hollen, Attorney General  
Wisconsin Department of Justice  
P.O. Box 7857  
Madison, WI 53707-7857  
Fax: 608-267-2779

Dear Attorney General Van Hollen:

The Democratic Party of Wisconsin has learned that your office has instructed state employees at the Wisconsin Department of Justice to engage in a political lobbying campaign that involves contacting members of the State Legislature on specific provisions in the proposed 2009-2011 budget.

Furthermore, your office has been sending DOJ employees the same talking points used by the Republican Party of Wisconsin and the Scott Walker for Governor campaign along with their political lobbying instructions.

According to sources within your agency, at least four of your top deputies, Ray Taffora, Kevin St. John, Gary Hamblin and Chris Blythe, have been contacting managers and instructing them to pass down these political lobbying orders and talking points to rank-and-file staff at the DOJ.

By doing this, you are essentially forcing state employees into a position where they must either act as your political pawns or face retribution from their managers at a time when job cuts are imminent. This is yet another example of your office abusing state resources and using state employees as tools to advance your political agenda.

The citizens of Wisconsin deserve to know more about your forced state employee lobbying campaign. In light of this, pursuant to Wis. Stats. §§ 19.31<sup>1</sup> through 19.39, I hereby request copies of any and all records relating to the forced political lobbying effort being coordinated by your office, including but not limited to:

Emails, memos, letters, talking points, phone logs, and daily calendars, between Ray Taffora, Kevin St. John, Gary Hamblin and Chris Blythe, and Department of Justice staff, regarding or related to contacting State Legislators and/or legislative staff about the Department of Justice 2009-2011 budget.

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<sup>1</sup> **Declaration of policy.** In recognition of the fact that a representative government is dependent upon an informed electorate, it is declared to be the public policy of this state that all persons are entitled to the greatest possible information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts of those officers and employees who represent them. Further, providing persons with such information is declared to be an essential function of a representative government and an integral part of the routine duties of officers and employees whose responsibility it is to provide such information. To that end, [ss. 19.32](#) to [19.37](#) shall be construed in every instance with a presumption of complete public access, consistent with the conduct of governmental business. The denial of public access generally is contrary to the public interest, and only in an exceptional case may access be denied.

*Authorized and Paid For By the Democratic Party of Wisconsin, Joe Wineke, Chair*

I further request copies of any and all records, including but not limited to emails, memos, letters, talking points, phone logs, and daily calendars, between Department of Justice staff and any and all staff or members of the State Legislature, staff or leadership of the Republican Party of Wisconsin or staff or leaders of the Scott Walker for Governor campaign.

The above requests include the time period between May 26, 2009 to June 2, 2009.

In a public records guide posted on your website, you state: "As Attorney General, I cannot overstate the importance of fully complying with the public records law, and fostering a policy of open government for all Wisconsin citizens."

If you are truly the champion of open records you claim to be, I trust you will promptly release all records surrounding this matter. I know I don't have to remind you that pursuant to Wis. Stats. § 19.35(4) (a), your response to the above-reference requests must be given "as soon as practicable and without delay." I look forward to promptly receiving these documents.

Should you deny my request in full or in part, please provide the specific reasons and the legal authority for withholding such information. I expect you to release all segregable portions of otherwise exempt material.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason A. Stephany". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jason A. Stephany, Executive Director  
Democratic Party of Wisconsin