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(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2003-04

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on Education, Ethics and Elections...

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
(**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

Senate

Record of Committee Proceedings

Committee on Education, Ethics and Elections

Senate Bill 337

Relating to: acceptance of certain political contributions by certain elective state officials and committees.

By Senators Harsdorf, Schultz, Brown, Stepp, Ellis and Cowles; cosponsored by Representatives Freese, Gundrum, Pocan, Black, Kestell, Musser, M. Lehman, LeMahieu, Ladwig, Bies, Olsen, McCormick, Van Roy, Hahn, Hines, Petrowski, Pope-Roberts, Gottlieb and Seratti.

December 03, 2003 Referred to Committee on Education, Ethics and Elections.

February 25, 2004 **PUBLIC HEARING HELD**

Present: (5) Senators Ellis, Stepp, Jauch, Robson and Hansen.
Absent: (2) Senators S. Fitzgerald and Reynolds.

Appearances For

- Sen. Sheila Harsdorf
- Roth Judd, Wisconsin Ethics Board, Madison, WI
- Mike McCabe, Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, 210 N. Bassett Street, Madison, WI 53703
- Marika Fischer Hoyt, 2510 Gregory Street, Madison, WI 53711

Appearances Against

- None.

Appearances for Information Only

- None.

Registrations For

Rev. Sue Larsen, Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin
Dawn Wians, Verona, WI
Sheri Kraus, Wisconsin Association of School Boards
Jay Heck, Common Cause in Wisconsin, 152 W. Johnson St. #212,
Madison, WI 53703
James E. Lake, AARP and Wisconsin Democracy Campaign
Representative Steve Freese
Francis Bicknell, 9 Beach Street, Madison, WI 53705

Registrations Against
None.

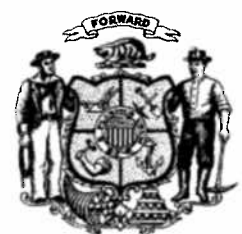
March 11, 2004

Failed to pass pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution 1.

Michael Boerger
Committee Clerk



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





Common Cause In Wisconsin

152 W. Johnson Street * P.O. Box 2597 * Madison, WI 53701-2597 * (608) 256-2686
E-Mail Address: ccwisjwh@itis.com * Website: www.commoncause.org/states/wisconsin

**TESTIMONY OF JAY HECK,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COMMON CAUSE IN WISCONSIN
IN FAVOR OF SENATE BILL 337--LEGISLATION TO
PROHIBIT CAMPAIGN FUND-RAISING DURING THE BUDGET**

**FEBRUARY 25, 2004
WISCONSIN STATE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, ETHICS AND ELECTIONS
SENATOR MIKE ELLIS, CHAIR**

Senator Ellis and Members of the Committee:

In just over three weeks, the 2003-2004 session of the Wisconsin Legislature will be history. You will have squandered nearly two years without having taken any decisive action to restore your reputation or, more importantly, the confidence of the citizens of this state in this institution following the deepest and most serious political scandal in Wisconsin's history.

Comprehensive campaign finance reform--which would attack and cure the root causes of the legislative caucus and fund-raising scandal which resulted in an unprecedented five state legislators being charged with felony and misdemeanor crimes for misconduct in public office-- or worse--in 2002, is barely still breathing and clinging to life despite efforts by the Governor and the legislative leadership to first ignore and now smother it to death.

Today, this committee has an opportunity to salvage at least one piece of the comprehensive reform legislation that the Chair of this committee has made his top legislative priority for the past five years and that Common Cause In Wisconsin has been proud to have been able to work with and support every step of the way.

We commend Senator Sheila Harsdorf for her commitment to campaign finance reform after having survived the most obscenely expensive legislative campaign in Wisconsin's history when more than \$3 million was spent in the 10th Senate District in 2000. We were happy to work with her on Senate Bill 337 to prohibit legislators and state officials from accepting any campaign contribution during the time the biennial state budget is being considered through its enactment.

This is legislation that CC/WI devised and first proposed in Wisconsin in 1997 in comprehensive reform legislation authored by State Senator Lynn Adelman and this provision has been included in every comprehensive reform measure since that time--and there have been many. All of them, of course, have been killed.

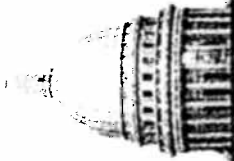
Last May 15th, CC/WI blew the whistle on the fact that the Co-Chair of the "powerful" Joint Committee on Finance was to hold a "birthday" party campaign fund raising event that evening following a full day in Joint Finance spent reshaping the state budget bill. We called on her to cancel that event and called on all legislators and statewide office holders to cancel and postpone any and all campaign fund-raising activity until work on the state budget was completed and it was signed into law. With a statutory deadline of June 30th for completion of all budget work--a mere six weeks away--it didn't seem like an unreasonable proposal. A number of legislators did respond to our request and cancelled or postponed fund raising events or fund-raising letters that had been scheduled to occur or be sent prior to June 30th. While not illegal, some legislators understood how terrible it looked to be raising campaign funds while crucial public policy decisions were being made about the Wisconsin's fiscal policy.

But for many other legislators and for Governor Doyle, the campaign fund raising continued. On May 16, 2003 the Joint Committee on Finance considered and acted on funding for transportation and specifically for road building projects in the state budget and they were all funded generously. On May 19th, the Road Builders held a fund raising event for the Speaker of the Assembly in Janesville. That very morning CC/WI blew the whistle again and urged the Speaker to cancel the event but he did not. Governor Doyle weighed in that day and said, "I don't think the appearance of it looks very good," and he indicated support for prohibiting fund raising during consideration of the state budget. But his own fund raising continued and Doyle attended the fund raising events of Democratic legislators holding fund raising events while the budget was being considered. Doyle took in more than half a million dollars during the first six months of 2003--a staggering amount comparable to anything former Governor Tommy Thompson used to rake in during the budget period. So much for the "new day" in Wisconsin politics candidate Jim Doyle promised us he would usher in as a candidate for Governor in 2002. Speaker Gard attended numerous fund raising events for Republican members of the Assembly during the budget period last year and held several for himself, including one in Racine on the evening following his road builders fund raiser in Janesville. The Speaker collected about \$100,000 for his own campaign war chest during the budget period last year.

Was all of this illegal? No but it should be. Not only does it look terrible but no one can argue with a straight face that it doesn't affect public policy decisions about the state budget.

Minnesota bans campaign fund raising during consideration of their state budget. So does Kansas, Georgia, Idaho, Nevada and even Texas. Wisconsin needs to become the 7th state in the nation to do so as well. *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, *the Wisconsin State Journal*, *The Capital Times*, *the Appleton Post-Crescent*, *the Eau Claire Leader-Telegram*, *the Wausau Daily Herald*, *the Ashland Daily Press* and other Wisconsin newspapers have all editorialized in support of this measure and that was just last year. If you need further evidence that this is the right thing to do, I'd suggest you get a copy of the criminal complaint filed against your former colleague, Senator Brian Burke and read the detailed account of how the state budget was utilized as a fund-raising tool.

Senate Bill 337 is a no-brainer. Pass it.



Wisconsin State Journal

WWW.MADIS

MADISON, WISCONSIN

JAY 16, 2003

Budget committee leader ripped for fund-raiser

Common Cause executive director says Sen. Darling's action "looks terrible."

By Scott Milfred
state government reporter

A key state senator with control over the state budget held a minimum \$100-per-person fund-raiser Thursday night in Milwaukee that "looks terrible" and "smacks of inappropriateness," a reform group leader charged.

But Sen. Alberta Darling, R-River Hills, said her campaign event at a stylish cocktail lounge was legal and shouldn't raise suspicion.

"It's not an impropriety, and you

won't see that in my record anywhere," she said during a break from her work on the state budget as co-chairwoman of the Joint Finance Committee at the state Capitol on Thursday.

Jay Heck, executive director of Common Cause in Wisconsin, acknowledged Thursday that state lawmakers can legally raise campaign money on the same day they're making multimillion-dollar decisions on state spending.

But that law should be changed, he urged, so that fund raising is banned from the time the governor introduces the budget until it's signed. Minnesota, Texas and Maryland have such laws, he said.

"This is the chair of finance — one of the most powerful people in

state government — holding a fund-raiser right in the midst of the crunch of the budget," Heck said. "It smacks of inappropriateness. The appearance is bad. It makes it look as though the budget process is up for auction."

Darling said Thursday she scheduled the fund-raiser at Centanni's in downtown Milwaukee to celebrate her 59th birthday, which was April 28. The event had been originally scheduled for April 24 but was delayed because of a conflict.

As it turned out, Darling didn't think she'd make it to the rescheduled fund-raiser from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday because the Finance Committee was working late at the Capitol.

But that didn't stop supporters

— some who might have a stake in how the budget turns out — from giving her campaign cash, Heck noted. Who gave Darling money at the event and how much won't be known until election reports are filed in July. Admission was advertised at \$100 with a higher "host level" of \$500.

"You can look at my records," Darling said. "I have never had an allegation of illegality or paying to play or twisting people's arms — period."

She added that lobbyists aren't allowed to donate to campaigns during the budget process. But people and groups that pay for lobbying work at Capitol can still give, Heck countered.

The Capital Times

MONDAY AFTERNOON

HOME FINAL

May 19, 2003

50 CENTS

MADISON, WISCONSIN

Plea: Stop raising funds

Common Cause rips legislators

By David Callender

The Capital Times

A government reform group is calling on Assembly Speaker John Gard and other legislative leaders to cancel campaign fund-raisers this week while work on the state budget continues.

Jay Heck, executive director of Common Cause in Wisconsin, today questioned why Gard, a Republican from Peshtigo, would hold a fund-raiser this evening at the home of a road builder in Janesville, far away from Peshtigo.

The move comes only days after Assembly Republicans announced a plan to fully fund next year's road construction projects in the budget.

"This is the budget shake-down period," Heck said. "Either the budget-writers on the Joint Finance Committee or legislative leaders figure this is the optimum time to shake down the special interest groups and raise money for their own or others' campaigns."

The budget is the only piece of legislation lawmakers must pass each session and it usually encompasses hundreds of issues important to special interests — ranging from funding for building projects to new regulations on businesses.

Members of the 16-member Joint Finance Committee, especially the Assembly and Senate co-chairs of the committee, are in an especially powerful position to determine what's in and out of the budget because they act on the bill first.

Heck criticized Senate co-chair Alberta Darling, R-River Hills, for holding a fund-raiser last week. Although Darling did not attend, citing a scheduling conflict, other legislative leaders did.

Assembly and Senate rules bar lawmakers from having campaign fund-raisers in Madison while the budget is pending — but don't prohibit them from seeking campaign contributions away from Madison.

But Heck said lawmakers should be doubly careful with their fund-raising activities — which he said could come this summer after the budget is passed — because of the cloud of scandal that now hangs over the Capitol.

Two top Democratic lawmakers — former Joint Finance Committee co-chairman Sen. Brian Burke, D-Milwaukee, and former Senate Majority Leader Chuck Chvala, D-Madison, — are facing felony charges for allegedly seeking campaign contributions in exchange for political favors.

Three top Republicans — including Gard's predecessor, Scott Jensen,

R-town of Brookfield — are also facing felony charges for using their office staffs to illegally raise campaign cash.

Gard's office had no comment on Heck's charges.

"Fund-raising is not part of the speaker's official duties, so we don't comment on it," said Gard spokesman Steve Baas.

In addition to Gard, state Sen. Mary Lazich, R-New Berlin, and Assembly Minority Leader Jim Kreuser, D-Kenosha, also had fund-raisers scheduled for this week.

Lazich's fund-raiser will feature Gard and Senate Majority Leader Mary Panzer, R-West Bend, as special guests. Heck said the two top GOP leaders will be a "hot draw for special interest groups seeking to curry favor while the budget is being written."

Heck accused Kreuser, whom he said represents a solidly Democratic district, of assuming "he can attract a lot of campaign cash while the state budget is in play."

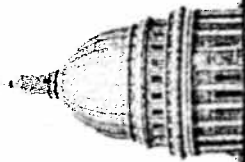
Neither Lazich nor Kreuser had an immediate response to Heck's comments.



Gard

T H U R S D A Y

Wisconsin State Journal



WWW.MADIS

MADISON, WISCONSIN

MAY 22, 2003

OUR OPINION

Budget decisions back up for bids

At last, Wisconsin lawmakers reach bipartisan agreement: It's shakedown time again.

Assembly Minority Leader Jim Kreuser, D-Kenosha, and Rep. Mary Lazich, R-New Berlin, a member of the Legislature's budget-writing committee, plan fund-raisers tonight in southeastern Wisconsin.

It's also the midst of the state budget review. Coincidence? We think not. Now's a great time to grab cash from big-money special interests willing to pull out the stops, and the checkbooks, to protect their interests.

The Legislature's Joint Finance Committee today is expected to wrap up revisions to the two-year budget proposal by Gov. Jim Doyle. Senate and Assembly votes come next. And influential leaders of both houses — such as Assembly Speaker John Gard and finance committee co-chairwoman and Sen. Alberta Darling, R-River Hills — are among those who've recently cranked up the fund-raising machinery.

Campaign fund-raising during budget season isn't illegal — yet — but it sure looks bad. Such brazen begging tells the public that this budget is for sale, and feeds cynicism among voters already disillusioned by the criminal charges accusing former legislative leaders of seeking cash for favors. It sends the message that nothing has really changed

Campaign fund-raising during state budget deliberations isn't illegal - but it sure looks bad.

around the Capitol.

Instead, lawmakers with integrity — and there still are many — should soon pass Senate Bill 12, the comprehensive campaign finance reform legislation crafted by Sen. Mike Ellis, R-Neenah, and supported by Sen. Jon Erpenbach, D-Middleton.

Among other things, the next round of reform would explicitly prohibit "pay to play," the trading of support or opposition to legislation for campaign donations. Lawmakers also ought to renew a ban all campaign fund-raising during the state budget process and campaign fund-raisers in Dane County any time the Legislature is in session. And new limits on the flow of money must be written to pass constitutional muster — rather than invite lawsuits, like last year's sham reform, which was struck down by the courts.

In the past, the state budget has been close to the center of a cycle of corruption that first embroiled Wisconsin's now-defunct partisan legislative caucus offices and then its top legislative leaders. Seen in this light, campaign fund-raising restrictions should become part of the broader effort to restore fiscal responsibility in state government.

M I L W A U K E E JOURNAL SENTINEL

METRO WEST EDITION * THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2003 * WWW.JSONLINE.COM

M I L W A U K E E JOURNAL SENTINEL

* EDITORIALS

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GEORGE STANLEY

DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR
GERRY HINKLEY

EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR
MICHAEL RUBY

Jim Doyle, hand extended

*This editorial
was written as
a direct result
of the 6/4/03
10/w/1 Release
criticizing Gov.
Doyle in this
matter.
— Jay*

Not long ago, we took several GOP legislators to task for raising money during budget deliberations. Not that there's anything wrong with that under current law. But hustling money during budget time doesn't pass the smell test and ought to be illegal — and it would be under a campaign finance bill sponsored by Sens. Michael Ellis (R-Neenah) and Jon Erpenbach (D-Middleton), who serves as minority leader.

Gov. Jim Doyle insists that he supports campaign finance reform, but on this one point, he plainly isn't quite ready to lead by example. It turns out that the governor has had his hand out during the budget season, too. On May 19, a letter from Doyle echoed the "new day for Wisconsin" theme of his inaugural address but made an old-day appeal for dollars to help Wisconsin's new governor fight for his version of the budget. "Now it's time to put . . . the old ways of doing business behind us," the letter said.

It also turns out that Doyle was asked about the GOP fund-raisers held by Assembly Speaker John Gard (R-Peshigo) and state Sens. Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) and Mary Lazich (R-New Berlin), as well as one held by Rep. James Kreuser (D-Kenosha), the Assembly's minority leader. "I don't think the appearance of it is very good," the governor said. Date? The same as his own letter, which, according to Common Cause Wisconsin, was actually postmarked May 23. If so, that would have given Doyle's people time to consider appearances, which matter plenty in politics, and pull the letter. They didn't.

Genuine First Amendment issues are at stake in the continuing debate over campaign finance reform — issues that the U.S. Supreme Court will consider next fall. Meantime, as we said last month, it shouldn't be too much to ask elected officials, starting with the state's most senior elected official, to lay off fund raising for a few months of budget making.

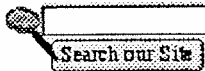


Stevens Point Weather

Temp: 72 °F
Hi: 71 °F
Lo: 48 °F

OPINION

Print |



Fri, Jun 6, 2003

Doyle proves hypocritical

on fund-raising

Thumbs down to Gov. Jim Doyle, who possesses the ability to talk out of both sides of his mouth all while putting his hand out. In May, Doyle told reporters he supported a ban on fund-raising during the budget period. When asked about Assembly Speaker Jon Gard's fund-raising events, Doyle said on May 19, "I don't think the appearance of it is very good."

The appearances are terrible for Doyle. His campaign sent out a fund-raising letter, dated May 19, that spells out the governor's budget agenda. "As we pass the milestone of my first 100 days in office, only one thing threatens to stand in my way: legislative leaders who refuse to come to the table, to work with me, and to pass a budget that will begin digging Wisconsin out of its staggering \$3.2 billion deficit," the letter says. He goes on to ask for contributions of \$100 or \$250.

Doyle has defended the letter, saying it is different from Gard's event, which was at the home of a Janesville road builder and followed Assembly Republicans' restoration of \$300 million in state highway projects. "It's not like I've gone to some special interest group that has some item before the budget," Doyle said in a press conference Wednesday.

But it's still fund-raising. "The very body of the fund-raising letter, with its detailed description of the Doyle budget agenda, and then asking for financial support for the Doyle campaign is exactly what's wrong and continues to be wrong in Madison," said Jay Heck of Common Cause in Wisconsin. His group supports the ban on fund-raising in the budget process.

Why ban fund-raising? The state's budget bill is typically full of unconnected items, and lawmakers take advantage of that to solicit campaign donations from special-interest groups.

Such a ban is part of a campaign finance bill proposed by Sens. Mike Ellis, R-Neenah, and Jon Erpenbach, D-Middleton. Wisconsin must come clean, and it must start by putting a stop to this sort of bartering during the budget process.

LEADER-TELEGRAM

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OPINIONS

Monday,
June 9, 2003
6A LEADER-TELEGRAM

LEADER-TELEGRAM

The Leader-Telegram is a division of the Eau Claire Press Co.
Don Huebscher Editor
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Gary Johnson Local News Editor

State politics has its own 'corked' bat

Fund-raising timing wrong

The baseball world was in a dither last week after Chicago Cubs slugger Sammy Sosa got caught red-handed using a corked bat after the bat shattered when he hit the ball, exposing the ruse to the umpires. Sosa is appealing an eight-game suspension.

This story was front-page news in USA Today and has been the buzz of sports talk circles.

The big losers in this, obviously, are Sosa's reputation and the integrity of baseball. Both likely will recover.

But that's baseball's problem. Just as NASCAR inspects cars after races to ensure the winner didn't cheat to get an advantage, and other sports monitor players for gambling and illegal drug use, the fairness of the contests must be guaranteed to keep the money coming in.

The larger issue is how Sosa's young fans will interpret his misdeed, which he says was an unintentional mistake. Will they perceive it as license to cheat on exams, on the field of play and in the bigger field of life?

The issue:
America is in an uproar after baseball star Sammy Sosa was caught using a corked bat.

Our view:
We should be more concerned over ethical issues that affect us directly, such as politicians raising money at the same time they're voting on budget matters.

The problem for society at large is that we spend too much time worrying about questionable ethical behavior that doesn't really matter and not enough time questioning such behavior that affects us directly.

Common Cause of Wisconsin, a political watchdog group, provided a good example last week, the day after Sosa's corked bat incident was getting so much attention.

Common Cause has led the way in supporting legislation that would ban state lawmakers from raising campaign funds while they are deliberating the state budget. The rationale behind this is obvious: Lawmakers shouldn't be making decisions about taxes and public spending at the same time individuals affected by those

decisions are giving money to the decision-makers. Common Cause criticized state Assembly Speaker John Gard, R-Peshtigo, for holding a fund-raiser in Janesville with a road builders group just three days after the Republican majority on the Joint Finance Committee restored full funding for road construction projects in the state budget. Common Cause claims Gard led the way for the full funding of the road projects.

Common Cause criticized other lawmakers for doing fund-raising during the budget period, a practice banned in six states, including Minnesota.

Lawmakers' responses are predictable. Mainly, they argue that the campaign money provided by special interest groups in no way influences their voting decisions. They also maintain that the right of free speech extends to political "donations," and that it's not about money per se, but about groups that share the lawmakers' ideology being able to offer their support.

The problem is, does anybody really believe that? Just as Sosa claims that the corked bat was one he only uses for exhibition home-run contests mistakenly getting into his hands, the lawmakers claim that the money that flows to them during budget deliberations does not influence their votes or your taxes.

Officials of Major League Baseball recognize the need to restore the integrity of the game to retain the confidence of paying customers. Why can't our elected officials similarly recognize that taking money from "concerned" citizens and groups at the very time they are deciding how much to tax and spend is bad for the integrity of Wisconsin government?

A corked bat may affect only the outcome of a baseball game. A "corked" political fund-raising system affects more important matters. The commissioners of our political system, we the voters, should demand that state government be cleansed of this unethical practice.

— Don Huebscher, editor

The Capital Times

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

June 4, 2003 ★ ★ ★

50 CENTS

MADISON, WISCONSIN

www.captimes.com

Doyle seeks funds in fight with GOP

Letter to backers cites budget

By David Callender

The Capital Times

Gov. Jim Doyle is using his feud with Republican lawmakers over the state budget to drum up campaign donations.

In a mailing sent late last month, Doyle asked thousands of potential donors to give at least \$100 to help him as he presses for legislative passage of his proposed state budget.



Doyle

"As we pass the milestone of my first 100 days in office, only one thing threatens to stand in our way: legislative leaders who refuse to come to the battle, to work with me, and to pass a budget that will begin digging Wisconsin out of its staggering

\$3.2 billion deficit," Doyle wrote.

He continued that a "new day" in state government is being threatened "by the petty agendas of a few in Madison who refuse to put Wisconsin first," but said he wouldn't back down from the challenge because "for too long, special interests have dictated state politics and undermined the people's trust."

The letter was dated May 18, a day before Doyle assailed Assembly Speaker John Gard for holding a fund-raiser at the home of a Janesville road builder just after Assembly Republicans moved to restore funding for state highway projects.

"I don't think the appearance of it is very good," Doyle said of the Gard event.

Doyle also said at the time that he would support a proposed ban on fund raising by lawmakers and the governor until after the state budget bill is signed.

Doyle spokesman Dan Leistikow said Tuesday there was a difference between Doyle's fund-raising letter and Gard's fund-raising event.

The Gard event "was a fund-raiser at the home of a road builder one day after the Republicans voted to give the industry more than \$300 million in the budget. The governor merely stated the obvious, that the appearance of it wasn't very good."

Leistikow called the letter a "broad-based fund-raising mailing" that went to several thousand people who had contributed to Doyle's past campaigns for governor and attorney general.

He added that the letter was not aimed at any special interest groups that might have issues pending in the budget, nor did it offer contributors any special face-to-face access to the governor.

But Leistikow appeared to back away from Doyle's support for an outright ban on fund raising while the state budget is pending.

He said only that Doyle "would consider" such a fund-raising ban as part of a comprehensive campaign finance reform package.

Leistikow insisted that Doyle is following the law as it is now stands; currently there are no bans on fund raising for either lawmakers or the governor while the budget is pending.

Reform groups have been pressing for such a ban because the budget is the one bill that lawmakers must pass every two years.

Traditionally, the budget bill has been loaded with scores of special interest items that would not pass as individual bills, and lawmakers have used the opportunity to solicit campaign donations.

Two top lawmakers — former Senate Majority Leader Chuck Chvala and former Sen. Brian Burke, who was co-chairman of the budget-writing Joint Finance Committee — are facing felony charges for allegedly offering to trade political favors for campaign donations.

The governor has even more power than lawmakers to shape the budget because in addition to drafting the original budget bill, he can rewrite it with his veto pen after lawmakers have passed it. The Legislature has never overridden a budget veto.

Jay Heck, director of the reform group Common Cause in Wisconsin, said he was disappointed by Doyle's fund-raising activities.

"Frankly, this isn't any better" than what Gard did, Heck said. "The problem is he (Doyle) is asking people to send him campaign contributions when decisions about the budget are being made. He says it's a 'new day,' but it's really the same old story."

Heck called Leistikow's comments "a distinction without a difference. You're still raising money."

"The whole point is we need to restore integrity to the budget process. You can't condemn this fund raising on the one hand and then go out and do it yourself," he said.

E-mail: dcallender@madison.com

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Mon, Jun 9, 2003

Doyle doesn't practice what he preaches

Subject: Ban on fund raising amid budget talks
 Our view: Governor's letter to supporters inappropriate

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We have supported Gov. Jim Doyle's ability to stick to his campaign promises to *fix the* state's budget mess without raising taxes and without drastically slashing aid to *local* governments. We didn't know that he also possesses the ability to talk out of *both sides* of his mouth while putting his hand out.

In May, Doyle told reporters he supported a ban on fund raising during the budget period. When asked about Assembly Speaker John Gard's fund-raising events, Doyle said on May 19, "I don't think the appearance of it is very good."

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But it's still fund raising. "The very body of the fund-raising letter, with it's detailed description of the Doyle budget agenda, and then asking for financial support for the Doyle campaign is exactly what's wrong and continues to be wrong in Madison," said Jay Heck of Common Cause in Wisconsin. His group supports the ban on fund raising in the budget process.

Why ban fund raising? The state's budget bill is typically full of unconnected items, and lawmakers take advantage of that to solicit campaign donations from special-interest groups.

Such a ban is part of a campaign finance bill proposed by Sens. Mike Ellis, R-Neenah, and Jon Erpenbach, D-Middleton.

Wisconsin must come clean, and it must start by putting a stop to this sort of bartering during the budget process.

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THURSDAY AFTERNOON

MADISON, WISCONSIN

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Views of The Capital Times

Time's ripe for reform

Gov. Jim Doyle and the Republican leaders of the Legislature are making lots of noise about the state budget this week, as Democrat Doyle describes his vetoes and the Republicans deride them. For their part, Wisconsinites are enjoying the summer, and rightly so. The budget debate is serious business, to be sure, but it is being driven by special interest pressure, not the desires or concerns of the citizenry.

Doyle and his Republican sparring partners all went into the budget debate having made the same basic commitment to business interests: State programs would be cut drastically in order to close a budget deficit created by deep cuts in corporate taxes over the past 20 years. As it turns out now, even more cuts will be necessary because the Legislature and the governor have agreed to slash another \$45 million annually in taxes on the largest corporations doing business in Wisconsin.

The sorry state of affairs in the Capitol has had the understandable effect of causing citizens to disengage. When the governor and leading figures of both houses of the Legislature are jetting around the state to attend fund-raising events organized by the very special interest groups that benefit from the budget, it is easy to grow cynical about the prospects for a budget that actually serves the interests of Wisconsin.

Coming after the scandals that rocked the Capitol last year — culminating in the decisions of former Senate Majority Leader Chuck Chvala, D-Madison, and former Assembly Speaker Scott Jensen, R-town of Brookfield, to step down after being charged with felony wrongdoing — the first six months of 2003 should have been a time of radical reform and genuine progress. Instead, it has been a rather dismal period, characterized by most of the old pathologies of politics in the Chvala-Jensen era.

According to a new analysis by Common Cause in Wisconsin of the current circumstances in the Capitol, the explanation for why meaningful campaign finance reforms have yet to be implemented is becoming increasingly clear. "We now know that one reason reform has been delayed was so legislators could engage in unprecedented fund raising while the budget was in play in order to maintain maximum leverage to shake down special interest groups and others for campaign contributions," explained Common Cause in a July 5 memorandum. "Common Cause in Wisconsin believes that more legislators held fund-raising events during consideration of the 2003-2004 budget than in any previous session, despite the fact that the legislative caucus scandal and the downfall of Chvala, Jensen and former Joint Finance Committee co-chair Brian Burke, D-Milwaukee, was in large part due to this 'quid pro quo' fund-raising activity during budget sessions."

Common Cause paints a dark picture. But the group argues that it is still possible to create a better image for Wisconsin.

As the budget fights wind down, Doyle and the Legislature can still redeem themselves and the state they lead. They've got a sound bipartisan campaign finance reform bill in the hopper. Senate Bill 12, sponsored by Senate Minority Leader Jon Erpenbach, D-Middleton, and former Senate Majority Leader Mike Ellis, R-Neenah, is well crafted, broadly supported and ready for implementation. All that Doyle and legislative leaders must do is act.

In the midst of the budget fight, the governor and the Legislature found time for a special session to implement changes in state drunken driving laws that were demanded by the federal government. They also found time to pass a program of new corporate tax cuts that were demanded by the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce business lobby.

Surely, there is more than enough time to enact a campaign finance reform measure in time to clean up the 2004 election campaigns in Wisconsin, and to bar elected officials from using their roles in budget considerations as an opening to secure more special interest campaign money.

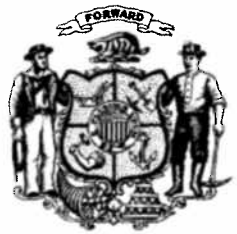
EDITORIAL SECTION

'Let the people have the truth and the freedom to discuss it and all will go well.'
— William T. Evjue, founding editor and publisher

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WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Wisconsin Democracy Campaign

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Statement to the Senate Committee on Education, Ethics and Elections in support of Senate Bill 337

February 25, 2004

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign urges the committee to support Senate Bill 337.

SB 337 prohibits incumbent partisan elective state officials from accepting contributions during the state biennial budget process. The bill has bipartisan support and is a key provision of Senate Bill 12, a comprehensive reform package that we endorse and which also is before this committee.

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign has for many years supported legislation to prohibit elected state officials from soliciting and accepting contributions during the state budget process. We documented in a series of reports last year how the process of formulating our state budgets has been turned into an auction where policy and spending decisions are determined by special interest campaign contributions rather than the public interest or the merits of the issues. We identified more than \$5 billion worth of tax breaks, pork barrel spending and other policy favors that have been given to big campaign contributors who have donated over \$46 million to state lawmakers in the last 10 years.

During last year's budget process alone, legislators and the governor collected \$1.9 million in campaign contributions while budget decisions were being made. Current legislative leaders and the four partisan legislative campaign committees they control raised 73% more than they brought in during the previous budget process. The budget spared wealthy special interests any pain associated with closing a \$3 billion shortfall. Special interests kept the \$5 billion in perks they already had and were given at least \$203.8 million worth of additional breaks. The burden of painful cuts and tax increases needed to balance the budget fell on people who do not make large campaign contributions.

Please move SB 337 out of committee and enable floor action this session. This bill is a modest but necessary step toward comprehensive campaign finance reform in Wisconsin.