



# SONDY POPE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
80TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



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## REP. POPE COLUMN: CORRUPTION PREVAILS IN WISCONSIN

This week, Assembly Republicans introduced and passed three bills that destroy Wisconsin's system of clean, open, and accountable government. The bills dismantle our nonpartisan elections and ethics board; eliminates necessary tools for investigation of government corruption; and ushers in unlimited, anonymous campaign contributions from wealthy individuals and corporations.

I have two very big concerns about these bills. First, GOP legislators who supported the bills clearly misunderstand why John Doe, the Government Accountability Board and campaign finance regulations became law in the first place. Second, and very importantly, legislators didn't consider the serious ramifications these actions will have on local elections for school boards, town boards, villages, cities, and counties.

As these bills become law, they will undoubtedly affect local communities and municipalities. Consider how, under these new campaign finance laws, elections can be rigged by wealthy individuals or companies who would then have the ability to manipulate policy to suit their needs.

Your voice and that of your neighbors won't matter if there is a big-moneyed contributor wishing to control the outcome of the election. Your elected officials could be influenced by special interests. Campaign lies could be used to destroy candidates and your voice will be lost beneath the piles of money spent to buy a seat at the elected table. Big corporations – like Walmart, for example – could buy the votes of city council members to look the other way when they come seeking zoning changes. Influence and election outcomes are at stake. Your small contribution will have little effect in the shadow of wealth.

The Government Accountability Board, our current campaign finance laws, and John Doe investigations all exist because of specific instances of corrupt activity in our past. The GAB was created after the 2001 caucus scandal, a scandal that stemmed from an ineffective elections board and led to the conviction of high-level legislative leaders on charges of criminal misconduct in public office. It was created to provide a nonpartisan approach to ethics investigations, and has effectively done so since that time.

I hold that these changes come from an administration that is drunk on power, wanting to control every facet of government in Wisconsin - including those in your community. I suggest that all citizens pay attention to what has happened in your state and give serious consideration as to how it is going to affect you, your family, and your community tomorrow. We have long passed the time to "talk politics" among our families, our friends,



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and our communities. As my colleagues on the other side of the aisle like to remind us, "elections have consequences!"