



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 5, 2025

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Legislators Introduce Bill to Ban Funding the Department of Justice With Private Money

Proposal ensures that WI DOJ is not for sale to the highest bidder

MADISON – Today, State Representatives Jerry L. O'Connor (R- Fond du Lac), Ron Tusler (R- Harrison), Dave Murphy (R- Greenville), Brent Jacobson (R- Mosinee), Bob Donovan (R- Greenfield), Ben Franklin (R- De Pere), and State Senators Eric Wimberger (R- Oconto) and Dan Feyen (R- Fond du Lac) introduced a new bill to prohibit the use of private moneys to fund prosecutor and investigative positions in the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

"Last year, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published an alarming report announcing State Attorney General Kaul's decision to sell a prosecutor position in the Department of Justice's Public Protection Unit to New York billionaire and Democrat megadonor Michael Bloomberg's climate activism organization," said O'Connor. "The decision to sell an out-of-state environmental activist the authority to investigate and prosecute Wisconsinites harms the public's faith that our democratic institutions will remain fair, impartial, and accountable to the people of our state."

"I was shocked when I learned the chief law enforcement officer of Wisconsin, Attorney General Kaul, is selling prosecutor positions to the highest bidder," said Tusler. "This is an insult to the fairness & integrity of our legal system. We want the best and brightest serving at the DOJ, not someone beholden to out-of-state billionaire activists."

The bill prohibits the Department of Justice from using the legal services of any person who is not a state employee, federal employee, or agent to assist in the investigation or prosecution of any civil or criminal cause or matter unless the DOJ uses a specific process under current law for contracting for legal services on a contingent fee basis or that person is a legal intern who earns no more than \$10,000 annually from their internship employer.

"What we learned from Zuckerbucks and election interference is that there is a danger in having interest groups and out-of-state billionaires fund and manage state and local workers. And, just like the Zuckerbucks constitutional amendment, I'm happy to author this legislation to keep our government controlled by the people of Wisconsin," said Wimberger. "This bill maintains the space for the current process allowing gifts and grants to help with operations, and discretion over employees still remains with DOJ."

"DOJ is a public office, not a private law firm for outside special interest groups," said Jacobson. "This bill ensures it stays that way."

"This is not a partisan issue. Blue states like Oregon and Virginia prohibit using private money to fund state DOJ investigators and prosecutors because the public deserves officials who are paid for by taxpayers and accountable only to them," concluded O'Connor. "Regardless of which party holds the Attorney General's office, this legislation is good for the citizens of Wisconsin. Our Department of Justice is not for sale."

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