

Illegal Coordination Highlighted in Guardian Story

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MADISON, WI - Last November, the Wisconsin Senate Republicans made changes to Wisconsin election laws that they knew would allow collusion and coordination between political candidates and dark money issue ads in elections. This move was needed because they had been breaking the law, most notable in the recall elections as highlighted in The Guardian leak of thousands of pages of a John Doe investigation into Governor Scott Walker.

Wisconsin courts have found that if a group is coordinating on issue ads with a candidate, their spending -- regardless of whether it includes express advocacy -- can be considered a contribution, which under Wisconsin law encompasses both cash donations and the giving of anything of value. AB 387 changed that and made collusion and coordination legal, even when candidates coordinate with 'issue advocacy' groups.

Issue ads claim they are NOT campaigning because they are just educating voters, not trying to influence the outcome of an election. But coordination with a candidate is the definition of campaigning. We argued all day on the Senate floor and every single Senate Republican knew they were blowing our campaign finance laws to pieces for their own personal benefit. That is the true crime in all of this. Politicians voting to benefits themselves.

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