

Wisconsin Republicans "Double Down" on their Assault on Open Government

Written by GBP Staff

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New attacks on Wisconsin's non-partisan government accountability organization are not intended to improve our state, they are only intended to improve Republicans' political fortunes and shield Gov. Walker's administration from scrutiny as he runs for president.

MADISON – After a failed attempt last week to gut Wisconsin's open records law, legislative Republicans have now issued new calls to dismantle Wisconsin's non-partisan government accountability organization, setting their sights on the watchdog agency in an effort to prevent investigations into potential ethics and criminal violations.

The move comes just a week after Republicans tried to dismantle the state's open records laws and a day after Assembly Republicans refused to pledge not to degrade Wisconsin's open records law in the future. Earlier this week Republicans voted down a Democratic budget amendment that would have taken major steps to ensure accountability and transparency at Governor Scott Walker's scandal ridden Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC).

The timing of the Republicans' attack on open government comes as Gov. Scott Walker is reportedly planning to formally announce he is running for president on Monday.

In recent years, open records requests have helped shed light on everything from potential corruption at Governor Walker's jobs agency to criminal activity that led to the convictions of six of the governor's former aides as county executive, as well as the revelation that major mining company donors essentially re-wrote large sections of Wisconsin's environmental laws.



Speaking in response to these latest attacks, Senate Democratic Leader **Jennifer Shilling**

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(D-La Crosse) said:

"Republicans were unsuccessful in their sneak attack on Wisconsin's open records laws, so naturally their next target is the government watchdog agency that enforces these laws. Other than the possibility that the State Capitol has been overrun by vampires, I don't know why there is this sudden rush to do business in the dark without any public oversight or transparency."



Concerned Assembly leaders were also critical of the Republican effort to turn Wisconsin's nonpartisan government watchdog into a partisan lapdog.

"The Republicans are doubling down on their assault on clean, open and transparent government," Assembly Democratic Leader **Peter Barca** (D-Kenosha) said today.

"This brazen attack on government oversight is especially troubling since it comes at a time when citizens and journalists are uncovering potential corruption at Gov. Walker's economic development agency," Barca said.

"Like so much of their agenda, these proposals are not intended to improve our state – they are only intended to improve Republicans' political fortunes and shield Gov. Walker's administration from scrutiny as he runs for president," he concluded.

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Assembly reporter Laura Smith contributed to this article.