

Senate Republicans Block Wisconsin's Open Record Laws

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MADISON, WI – After leading the charge to gut Wisconsin's open record laws last summer, Senate Republicans have continued their fight against clean, open and transparent government. In the final days of the legislative session, Senate Republicans are once again blocking action on legislation (AB873/SB704) to expand access to open records.

"Elected officials should work for Wisconsin families, not out-of-state special interests," said Matt Ullsvik, SSDC Executive Director. "Instead, Senate Republicans continue to wage war on transparency and accountability to hide their misguided political agenda and special interest influences."

Last summer, Several Finance Committee members including Senators Sheila Harsdorf (R-River Falls), Tom Tiffany (R-Hazelhurst) and Luther Olsen (R-Ripon) voted to gut Wisconsin's open record laws and exempt legislators from public scrutiny. Additionally, a recent report by the Associated Press found that the Senate Republican Leader failed to fully comply with a routine open records request last month.

"This year's Sunshine Week is a powerful reminder of the importance of government transparency," added Ullsvik. "Special interest influence at WEDC, large campaign donors getting preferential treatment and the cost of Gov. Walker's presidential campaign were just a few of the major stories revealed thanks to Wisconsin's open record laws. Rather than more Republican attacks on transparency, residents heading to the polls this year should demand more accountability and reject Republican secrecy."