

Brad Schimel's Defense of 'Pay to Play' Earns a Spot on Wall of Shame

Written by Democratic Party of Wisconsin, Melissa Baldauff

Tuesday, 30 September 2014 12:08 - Last Updated Tuesday, 30 September 2014 12:11



MADISON - Attorney General candidate Brad Schimel's refusal to investigate a state legislator for introducing a bill to benefit a big financial donor -- and his endorsement of the practice known as pay to play -- has become the newest addition to the Brad Schimel Wall of Shame.

<http://schimelwallsofshame.tumblr.com/>

"Brad Schimel has flat-out politicized the Waukesha County district attorney's office," Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair Mike Tate said Tuesday. "In his campaign, he somehow manages to keep a straight face while saying he wants to keep politics out of the Attorney General's office. But as district attorney he has made one politically motivated decision after another. He would do the same thing as Attorney General."

"In the case in question Schimel not only refused to investigate or prosecute the legislator, Joel Kleefisch, but he defended the practice that most people call pay to play," Tate said.

Incredibly, Schimel said:

"Why can't a legislator press for legislation that benefits a person who has contributed to their campaign? Isn't that the essence of representative government?"

When it was revealed that Kleefisch had introduced a bill at the request of a major Republican donor -- which would have drastically reduced the wealthy donor's child support payments -- Schimel, the district attorney in Kleefisch's home county, was asked by One Wisconsin Now, a research and advocacy organization, to investigate.

"Schimel refused, saying basically, that's the way the system works. You make your contribution and you get your legislation. It's what's called vending machine legislating," Tate said.

The GOP donor, Michael Eisenga, has given \$51,760 to Republicans since 2005, with \$19,500 going to Gov. Scott Walker's campaign and \$10,000 to Kleefisch and his wife, Rebecca, who is Walker's lieutenant governor.

Kleefisch, the legislator, gave \$1,000 to Schimel's campaign in 2013, while Schimel's campaign gave Kleefisch \$100 a year earlier. "Schimel apparently saw no conflict of interest and made the decision himself to give Kleefisch a free pass," Tate said.

Background:

Turning a blind eye to political corruption?: <http://fox6now.com/2014/06/15/turning-a-blind-eye-to-political-corruption-waukesha-co-da-brad-schimel-facing-accusations/>

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Schimel declines to investigate: <http://www.jsonline.com/blogs/news/262719321.html>

Republic AG candidate Brad Schimel: Why can't legislators, donors collaborate on bills: http://host.madison.com/news/local/writers/jessie-opoien/republican-ag-candidate-brad-schimel-why-can-t-legislators-donors/article_7ec776d7-640a-578f-8ee9-83192bb99636.html

AG candidate Brad Schimel criticized for response to investigation request: http://host.madison.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/on-politics/ag-candidate-brad-schimel-criticized-for-response-to-investigation-request/article_fff3e9d4-457e-56e8-94fd-bad82a8f6b39.html

Kleefisch and Schimel's warped view of democracy: <http://www.slypodcasts.com/apps/blog/online-wisconsin-nows-scot-ross-kleefisch-schimels>