

Sen. Johnson Should Come Clean on His Likely Illegal \$10 Million Corporate Payout

Written by Democratic Party of Wisconsin, Harry Hartfield
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Campaign and legal experts say Johnson must release his alleged agreement with Pacur or admit that one does not exist. Payout would violate federal law without a formal agreement drafted before he ran for office in 2010.

MADISON - In a press call Tuesday, former Lt. Governor and President of Americans for Campaign Reform, Barbara Lawton, and Jonathan Berkon, an election lawyer at Perkins Coie LLP, called on Senator Ron Johnson to release his alleged agreement with Pacur over his \$10 million payout.

The call comes after Senator Johnson admitted in an interview with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Friday that he did not know the amount he would be paid before he left Pacur. The revelation makes it likely Senator Johnson's \$10 million payout violated federal election laws that ban corporations from donating directly to campaigns. Johnson cannot prove the deal did not violate federal law without a formal agreement drafted before he ran for office in 2010.

Participants urged Johnson to either release the agreement or come clean and admit that one does not exist. Here are excerpts:



Former Lt. Governor and President of Americans for Campaign Reform, Barbara Lawton: "For six years, Johnson has equivocated about the terms of this alleged deal. It's clear he has not been honest about his alleged agreement. But there's an easy fix. He could produce the document for public scrutiny and come clean to the voters right now. I find his cavalier attitude on this disturbing to say the least, but part of a pattern. As a senator, he protects people like Donald Trump, not middle class Wisconsinites."

Jonathan Berkon, lawyer at Perkins Coie LLP: "The Federal Election Commission in similar

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circumstances has said that absent any preexisting policy regarding these compensation arrangements...would be a contribution to the campaign. And that's what we have here without any evidence that Senator Johnson's apparently unwilling to produce -- that he alone received the \$10 million payout, that he appears to have been the person who determined the amount that was paid...And as we learn more and more, it just continues to look to be the case that Senator Johnson received an illegal \$10 million corporate contribution."