

One Wisconsin Now: Bipartisan critics assail Scott Walker led Republican Governors Association's dishonest, Russian style foray into fake news

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MADISON, Wis. — According to a media report, the Gov. Scott Walker-led Republican Governors Association (RGA) has launched a propaganda website masquerading as a legitimate news outlet to spread negative attacks on Democrats and promote Republicans. The website was promoted in an RGA fundraising appeal obtained by One Wisconsin Now as, “fact-checking the liberal media,” but includes a mix of stories from legitimate media sources in addition to right wing news outlets and the RGA’s own press releases.

“Career politician Scott Walker is taking his schtick national, again,” said One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Scot Ross. “Here in Wisconsin we all know he’ll say and do anything to win elections. Now as head of the RGA he’s overseeing a dishonest, Russian style propaganda operation designed to mislead the public to advance the political ambitions of himself and other Republican gubernatorial candidates.”

According to the story:

“The Republican Governors Association has quietly launched an online publication that looks like a media outlet and is branded as such on social media. The Free Telegraph blares headlines about the virtues of GOP governors, while framing Democrats negatively. It asks readers to sign up for breaking news alerts. It launched in the summer bearing no acknowledgement that it was a product of an official party committee whose sole purpose is to get more Republicans elected.”

The report goes on to note:

“The governors association describes the website as routine political communication. Critics, including some Republicans, say it pushes the limits of honest campaign tactics in an era of increasingly partisan media and a proliferation of “fake news” sites, including those whose material became part of an apparent Russian propaganda effort during the 2016 presidential campaign.”

When contacted by a reporter for comment, Walker, ostensible co-author of the self-promotional book entitled *Unintimidated*, “... deferred questions through a spokesman to the group’s national staff.”

Ross concluded, “It takes a special level of unscrupulous to mislead the public and attack the media like the Scott Walker led RGA is doing with this propaganda operation. There’s no question he’s hitched himself and Republican governors across the country to Donald Trump’s ‘fake news’ bandwagon.”