

# One Wisconsin Now: Do Lawmakers Still Support Lawbreaker Candidate for State Superintendent of Public Instruction?

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## MEDIA CONTACT

Mike Browne, Deputy Director  
[mike@OneWisconsinNow.org](mailto:mike@OneWisconsinNow.org)  
[\(608\) 444-3483](tel:(608)444-3483)

MADISON, Wis. — A number of Republican state legislators endorsing Lowell Holtz for State Superintendent of Public Instruction have chased media attention touting their “tough on crime” bona fides and denouncing the use of tax dollars for what they believe are questionable expenditures. One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Scot Ross is asking why they are yet to speak out against Holtz in light of the evidence of his repeated violations of state law prohibiting campaigning on public time and conspiring to use public resources to gain private political advantage.

“We’ve seen these Republican legislators talk big on law and order and pose for holy pictures, denouncing what they believe to be misuse of public funds,” commented Ross. “But it seems they’ve lost their voice now that the candidate they’re publicly endorsing for state office appears to be a serial violator of state laws prohibiting campaigning on public time and was willing to put \$500,000 of state tax dollars on the table in discussing a potential election bribe.”

As reported by multiple state media outlets, Holtz was corresponding via his official email, during the middle of a work day in May 2016, about his campaign activity and seeking additional support for his run. He also was found to be discussing possible support from “outside groups” while on the job as a public employee.

Prior to the February 21 Primary Election, Holtz's opponent publicly revealed that the pair had surreptitiously met in December 2016 to discuss a deal intended to get one of them to support the other candidate. The scheme, which Holtz claims was concocted at the urging of unnamed "business leaders," would have provided the candidate who agreed to support the other a guaranteed job at the Department of Public Instruction for three years at an annual taxpayer-funded salary of \$150,000. As envisioned they would also have been provided with a chauffeur and full state benefits, a total compensation package likely worth over \$500,000.

This week One Wisconsin Now submitted evidence and asked the Milwaukee and Rock County District Attorneys to investigate Holtz for possible violations of state law covering government and its administration including prohibitions on campaigning on public time. Previously, a complaint from One Wisconsin Now regarding Holtz and others discussions about what appears to be an election bribe was filed with the Wisconsin Elections Commission.

Ross concluded, "We've seen something, Lowell Holtz, campaigning on the public dime and scheming to use public resources for his private, political benefit. Unless they say something, these Republicans are saying they endorse the sleazy antics of Lowell Holtz."