

# One Wisconsin Now: Files formal complaint, seeks investigation of John Humphries, Lowell Holtz attempted election bribe

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MADISON, Wis. — During a joint radio appearance, Department of Public Instruction candidates Lowell Holtz and John Humphries traded accusations over a meeting they had in December 2016 to try to negotiate a deal intended to get one of them to drop out of the race and support the other candidate. [One Wisconsin Now filed a complaint today](#) with the Wisconsin Ethics Commission alleging that the deal they discussed was not just sleazy but possibly illegal. The complaint asks that Holtz, Humphries and other unnamed parties be investigated for possible violations of state laws prohibiting election related bribery.

“There’s no question the election bribe deal that John Humphries and Lowell Holtz negotiated to try to buy the other’s support is sleazy and exposes both of them as crass politicians only out for themselves,” commented One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Scot Ross. “What our complaint asks is to determine if what they did was illegal, and if so, make sure they’re held accountable under the law.”

As reported by numerous media outlets, the scheme, concocted at the urging of unnamed “business leaders,” would have provided the candidate who agreed to leave the race and support the other a guaranteed job at the Department of Public

Instruction for three years at a taxpayer-funded salary of \$150,000 per year. In addition to the job, they would have been provided with a chauffeur and full state benefits, a total compensation package likely worth in excess of \$500,000.

In addition, the proposed job duties would give the recipient “complete control” over specified school districts. A draft of the agreement provided to the media indicated that, in exchange for getting out of the race, Holtz sought to exercise these unlimited powers over the public schools in the Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha districts. He added that his unlimited power over Green Bay would be “negotiable.”

Ross noted that one of the candidates, John Humphries, had already negotiated a controversial side deal for himself as part of his run for political office. He agreed to resign his position with the Dodgeville School District in exchange for receiving a consulting contract that allows him to bill the school for up to \$650 a day to work on his own as a contractor instead of an employee overseen by the district. The rate he is paid as a contractor is nearly \$300 more per day than what he received as a salaried employee.

He concluded, “The actions of Holtz, Humphries and whoever the other unnamed parties involved in it are reprehensible, immoral and possibly illegal. The futures of our kids and our public schools aren’t items to be traded between politicians seeking advantage to advance their personal ambitions. And neither is a \$500,000 taxpayer-funded job and benefit package.”