

Bill Kaplan: Walker and Trump are phonies

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Wisconsin GOP Governor Scott Walker has cultivated his image. The Washington Post said: "Walker's fighting posture is tempered by an Everyman – some would say milquetoast – persona that (he) goes out of his way to emphasize. It includes a fondness for Wisconsin-made Harley-Davidson motorcycles ... and a penchant for buying clothes from Wisconsin discount retailer Kohl's." Trumping Walker, Trump is the consummate showman. The billionaire bully presents himself as a populist. There is talk of "draining the swamp" and the "forgotten men and women of our country".

Image vs. reality. Both Walker and Trump are demagogic politicians. Their modus operandi is scapegoating others. They act as if deception is equivalent to reality. Pathological lying – compulsive and habitual – is the norm for Walker and Trump. Constant deception on trade, education, infrastructure and taxes.

Walker, supposedly "unintimidated", stands aside as Trump declares a trade war against the world (ignoring an old adage, avoid a two-front war). Here's the rub: Wisconsin farmers and manufacturers, including their workers, depend on trade. Trump's ill-advised and thoughtless trade war is hurting Wisconsin. For example, the Chippewa Valley Bean Company in Menomonie, is losing its European market for Wisconsin grown kidney beans (Wall Street Journal). The beans are filling warehouses. Why? Trade wars and tariffs escalate uncontrollably. Foreign markets are also being lost for Wisconsin cheese, cranberries, ginseng, soybeans and more.

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“The Trump administration (is) promising \$12 billion in emergency aid to support producers of commodities... . It isn’t known what, if any, benefit processors such as Chippewa Valley and other businesses along the supply chain will see from the aid” (Journal). It’s also bad for manufacturers such as Harley-Davidson. But Trump just issues insults and threats, while Walker quivers. Make America “great again”. Malarkey!

Same for education. Running for reelection, Walker presents himself as the “education governor”, Notwithstanding Walker’s cut of \$800 million (kindergarten through high school), his “record investment in schools” (Walker TV ad) was rated “mostly false” by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Then there is the \$500 million Walker cut from the UW-System (Washington Post). However, Trump is no piker. The Trump budget called for “massive cuts to college student aid programs” and other education spending (Washington Post).

Then there is infrastructure. For example, Wisconsin roads and highways, once the envy of the nation, are now in the bottom tier. Former Walker-appointed Transportation Secretary Mark Gottlieb said: “They (Walker administration) wanted the department to submit a budget that pretended if we just went along like we were ... everything would be fine” (Capital Times). Similarly, Trump’s \$1.5 trillion infrastructure plan amounts to \$21 billion – 1 percent (Washington Post).

Finally, taxes. Walker and Trump cut taxes for the well-heeled and corporations. And, now Walker is giving a one-time \$100 per child tax rebate to families – a political bribe for November? Moreover, the Trump corporate tax cuts are ballooning the deficit. The tool box will be empty to cope with a recession or climate change (Wisconsin Budget Project and New York Times). Walker and Trump are phonies.

— Kaplan wrote a guest column from Washington, D.C. for the Wisconsin State Journal from 1995 – 2009.