

James Wigderson: Tony Evers discovers the powers of his office

Posted on Friday, Jul 6, 2018

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When politicians suddenly discover political positions and beliefs they never held before, we tend to be skeptical. Is their Damascene conversion legitimate, or just the result of ambition?

In the case of Wisconsin Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Evers, it's pretty clear ambition is driving him to actions he never would have taken if he wasn't running for governor. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel is reporting Evers has increased the rate of denying teaching licenses.

"Shortly after Republicans accused him of being soft on teachers guilty of improper and immoral conduct, state schools Superintendent Tony Evers cracked down," the newspaper reported. "Records show Evers, the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination for governor, and his agency revoked or negotiated the surrender of the licenses of 12 educators last September — by far the most of any month during Evers' eight-year tenure. He had previously averaged less than one revocation a month."

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Of course, the Department of Public Instruction is claiming it's a big coincidence, just as they claimed there was nothing Evers could have done to take away the teaching license of [Middleton teacher Andy Harris](#).

Evers' campaign for governor has already done some good: it's forced him to take teacher discipline seriously. Perhaps he'll start taking the rest of his job seriously, too, and start doing something about the failing schools in this state. We're not

hopeful, unfortunately, because Evers would have to accept responsibility for his failure to take action before instead of blaming Governor Scott Walker for supposedly slashing school spending even though we're now spending more than we ever have before on public education.

That's the downside of Evers' campaign for governor, his dishonest attacks on the governor after initially [praising the last state budget](#) as "pro-kid."

— *Wigderson is editor of [RightWisconsin](#).*