

One Wisconsin Now: Assembly Speaker Robin Vos pushes budget cuts, continues to rack up legal bills on public dime

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When It Comes to Lawyers for Himself, Vos Spares No Taxpayer-Funded Expense

MADISON, Wis. — Assembly Speaker Robin Vos is a driving force behind Republican cuts to proposed funding for K-12 public schools including special education, has declared leveraging federal funds to expand access to health care will occur over his dead body, opposes funding to replace lead pipes that are poisoning children and has refused to fully fund financial aid for higher education, leaving over 30,000 students eligible for help with none. Yet when it comes to tapping taxpayer funds for lawyers for himself, Vos spares no expense.

One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Analiese Eicher noted Vos' use of taxpayer-funded lawyers to keep himself from being deposed over his role in rigging state legislative district lines, actions he took as a public official using state resources, is a prime example.

"In just the last few weeks Speaker Vos has worked to cut funding for programs for special education students, people struggling to get health care, kids being poisoned by lead in pipes and students trying to get higher education," commented

Eicher. “But when it comes to lawyers for himself, there’s no price he won’t make taxpayers pay.”

According to newspaper reports, Vos and the Republican-controlled legislature are racking up massive legal bills, including paying a Chicago based law firm \$120,000 per month to defend their actions.

Vos’ publicly-funded lawyers have been fighting an effort to depose him over his role in the 2011 redrawing of state legislative district lines. His taxpayer-funded counsel has taken the case within one step of the U.S. Supreme Court to protect Vos. The November 2018 election is a dramatic demonstration of how the rigged lines worked to the advantage of Vos and his fellow Republicans. Despite Democrats winning 54 percent of the total votes in races for the State Assembly, Republican Vos leads a state Assembly in which his party holds 63 of the 99 seats.

Protecting themselves from being called to account for their actions in public office isn’t the only example of Vos and the Republicans’ profligate spending of tax dollars on lawyers for themselves. They have signed up a Virginia-based law firm to pursue litigation over their radical anti-abortion bills and most recently signed up an attorney with a murky ethical past to try to slow efforts to protect clean water.