

One Wisconsin Now: How “Boss” Robin Vos does business

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MADISON, Wis. — An investigative report by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel exposes the self dealing ways of Assembly Speaker Robin Vos. According to the report, Vos, who owns millions of dollars in rental property and a property management company in Whitewater, has shepherded numerous bills through the state legislature making over 100 changes to state laws to advantage landlord like himself in dealings with tenants. As Assembly Speaker, it is Vos who decides which bills are, and which bills are not, scheduled for consideration.

“It doesn’t get any sleazier than this,” said One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Analiese Eicher. “Robin Vos is a millionaire landlord who has repeatedly used his power as Assembly Speaker to change state laws to benefit his personal business.”

According to the report:

BACKED BY ASSEMBLY SPEAKER ROBIN VOS — A COLLEGE-TOWN LANDLORD WITH 23 PROPERTIES WORTH ABOUT \$3.8 MILLION — THE REPUBLICAN-CONTROLLED LEGISLATURE ENACTED FIVE MAJOR BILLS LARGELY BENEFITING LANDLORDS. THE MEASURES SPEED UP THE EVICTION PROCESS, ELIMINATE SOME TENANT LEGAL DEFENSES, LIMIT THE POWER OF CITIES TO POLICE LANDLORDS AND CAP FEES TIED TO BUILDING CODE VIOLATIONS. THEY ALSO ALLOW LANDLORDS TO [TOSS RENTERS’ BELONGINGS ON THE CURB](#) IMMEDIATELY AFTER AN EVICTION, INSTEAD OF PLACING THE PROPERTY IN STORAGE.

The story details one particularly egregious example of Vos' self dealing:

WHEN FIVE STUDENT RENTERS MOVED OUT OF A HOUSE SAYING THEY HAD LOST ELECTRICITY AT LEAST TWO DOZEN TIMES DURING THE SUMMER OF 2010, A VOS COMPANY SUED THEM FOR BREACH OF CONTRACT. ONE STUDENT, WHO HAD PAID HER RENT IN ADVANCE, FILED A COUNTERSUIT DEMANDING A REFUND ... DURING AN ENSUING FIGHT OVER THE LEGAL FEES, THE TENANT'S LAWYER, BRIAN SCHUK, WAS STUNNED TO LEARN THAT VOS WAS SPONSORING LEGISLATION THAT EFFECTIVELY CAPPED LEGAL FEES AT THREE TIMES THE AMOUNT AWARDED IN COMPENSATORY DAMAGES.

The court records for this and other cases in which Vos has been involved have been collected and are posted on One Wisconsin Now's website: [Meet Boss Vos](#).

Vos, who has been in elected office since 1994, attempted to brush off his unseemly self dealing by suggesting he was simply a citizen legislator drawing on his personal experience.

Eicher concluded, "There's a big difference between legislators drawing on their personal experience to inform their votes and legislators like Robin Vos using their position to boost their bottom line."