

One Wisconsin Now: Lawyer/lobbyist hired by Republicans bows out of opioid settlement discussions

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Republicans Must Answer Question: Now What?

MADISON, Wis. — As reported by the media late last week, due to conflicts of interest a lawyer/lobbyist hired at taxpayer expense by the Republican chairs of the Joint Committee on Finance [will not participate in discussions with the Attorney General](#) related to billions of dollars at stake in multi-state litigation brought against opioid manufacturer Purdue Pharma. One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Analiese Eicher noted this is yet more proof that a Wisconsin Republican temper tantrum law restricting the power of the Attorney General to settle lawsuits, passed after losing the office in November 2018, is simply unworkable.

“When Republicans lashed out in their 2018 post-election temper tantrum, they were more interested in getting revenge for losing an election than passing laws that help the state,” commented Eicher. “Now we find out the solution Republicans proposed for the mess they made turns out to be no solution at all. The question they owe us an answer to is, now what?”

In late August, the Republican co-chairs of the state budget committee [hired a lawyer at state taxpayer expense](#) who mere days earlier was announced as [part of a new contract lobbying operation](#). The move came as part of an ongoing dispute in

which Republicans are refusing to agree to confidentiality to allow the Attorney General to brief them on possible settlements in litigation, like multi-state litigation involving opioid manufacturer Purdue Pharma, as he is required to do by a controversial law the Republicans passed after losing the office in November 2018.

Before the revelation their lawyer/lobbyist would not be working for Republicans, at taxpayer expense, in matters related to opioid lawsuit settlements, [One Wisconsin Now raised concerns about possible conflicts of interest](#). Among the ethical landmines raised by their GOP's lawyer/lobbyist hire was his work recruiting litigants to sue opioid manufacturers, his law firm's financial interest in possible settlements and his boss at the lobbying practice for which he works being registered to lobby on behalf of a big drug company.