

# One Wisconsin Now: Questions raised about Assembly speaker benefiting from state tax loophole

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## Is Tax Break Debate Personal for Robin Vos?

MADISON, Wis. — Assembly Speaker Robin Vos has drawn a legislative line in the sand over Gov. Tony Evers' plan to responsibly and sustainably fund a middle class tax cut by closing a huge loophole being exploited by a small group of high end taxpayers. One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Analiese Eicher questioned if Vos has a personal financial stake in the debate fueling his ferocious defense of the tax giveaway to owners of manufacturing businesses.

“Robin Vos has staked out his position that he would rather defend a tax loophole for millionaires than responsibly deliver tax savings for the middle class,” commented Eicher. “Is his interest in more than just the policy or is it also personal for his own bottom line?”

According to the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau, nearly 80 percent of the tax break Vos is fighting tooth and nail to preserve will go to individuals with adjusted gross incomes of over \$1 million for tax year 2019. Under his plan to provide tax savings to middle class families, Gov. Evers has instead proposed limiting the credit for manufacturing claimants.

Vos' financial disclosures reveal his significant personal wealth that includes millions in real estate holdings and businesses incorporated as Robin J. Vos Enterprises, Inc. and Romata LLP. Romata owns property assessed as manufacturing that houses popcorn manufacturing and packing operations under the corporate umbrella of Robin J. Vos Enterprises.

Tax records obtained by One Wisconsin Now show Romata reported \$0 in net state tax liability in 2017 and Robin J. Vos Enterprises reported \$0 net state tax liability for 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Eicher noted Vos has a habit of mixing the professional and personal business. For example as Assembly Speaker Vos has taken thousands of dollars in special interest funded travel and perks, including a controversial European junket underwritten by payday lenders that culminated with Vos marrying for the third time, in Italy. The trip came under scrutiny in an FBI investigation that resulted in the resignation of Ohio House of Representatives Speaker Cliff Rosenberger, who in addition to being Vos' travelling companion, was the best man at his third wedding.

She concluded, "Robin Vos has a history of mixing policy, politics and personal business that casts a shadow over this tax debate."