

One Wisconsin Now: Republicans reject Attorney General effort to comply with law they passed

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MADISON, Wis. — In 2011 when Republicans were scheming to rig state legislative district lines for their own partisan advantage, senators and representatives being given previews of their district maps [signed secrecy agreements](#). Now, many of the same lawmakers are refusing to agree to confidentiality to allow the Democratic Attorney General to brief them on a possible settlement opportunity in multi-state litigation, as he is required to do by a controversial law Republicans passed after losing the office in November 2018.

“Republicans signed secrecy agreements at the direction of their leaders to get a look at their rigged legislative district maps,” commented One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Analiese Eicher. “When the Democratic Attorney General is asking for confidentiality so he can comply with requirements they imposed on him, they say it’s a nonstarter.”

Eicher noted that mere days after losing the 2018 election for Attorney General, Republican legislative leaders, with the help of election losers Scott Walker and Brad Schimel, schemed to pass new laws to interfere with the incoming Democratic Attorney General doing his job. Among the measures was a requirement that the Attorney General seek approval from the legislature’s Joint Committee on Finance before settling litigation in which the Department of Justice is involved.

To comply with the law and not potentially violate legal and ethical standards, the Attorney General yesterday requested that the members of the Joint Committee on Finance sign confidentiality agreements before being briefed on a settlement opportunity in multi-state litigation that could significantly impact the state. The committee's Republican co-chairs refused the request.

Ironically, both Representative John Nygren and Senator Alberta Darling signed confidentiality agreements in 2011 related to the Republican rigging of legislative district lines. In fact, according to media reports, "... almost all Republican lawmakers signed legal agreements promising not to discuss the new maps while they were being developed."

Eicher concluded, "Since their election losses in November 2018, the behavior of Wisconsin Republicans hasn't just been petty, it's been detrimental to the state of Wisconsin."