

Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council: Thanks Gov. Tony Evers for vetoing legislative misconduct secrecy bill

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The Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council applauds Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers for vetoing [Assembly Bill 407](#), to create a legislative service agency called the Legislative Human Resources Office. As the Council [noted](#), the bill contained troublesome language that could be used to keep the public from knowing about allegations of misconduct by members of the Legislature and their staffs.

Evers said the bill, which he vetoed in its entirety, would have created “a blanket exemption for the Legislature’s personnel records.” He added: “The people of Wisconsin have a right to know about misconduct of public officials, including those in the Legislature.”

The bill as passed said the new legislative human resources office “shall at all times observe the confidential nature of records, requests, advice, complaints, reviews, investigations, disciplinary actions, and other information in its possession relating to human resources matters.”

On June 30, the same day that the state Senate [passed](#) SB 407 on a voice vote with minimal discussion, a Dane County judge [ruled](#) that legislature had violated Open Records Law by withholding records related to investigation into allegations of sexual harassment involving former Rep. Staush Gruszynski.

In other words, the Legislature attempted to change the rules just as it was found guilty of breaking the law.

No other state or local body gets to entirely withhold any records relating to human resources, and there is no clear reason why the Legislature should have been treated any differently.

Evers indicated in his veto message that he would support a “clean bill” that would not be used to “hide official misconduct from public scrutiny.”

We thank him for his courage and his fidelity to Wisconsin’s long and proud transition of open government.