

# WisGOP: Gov. Evers doubles down on supervisor-significant others' 60k pay raise

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**MADISON, Wis.** — In case you missed it, Tony Evers' doesn't believe his office should be subject to having policies in place when it comes to supervisor-subordinate relationships. Last week, the [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#) questioned the Governor after Dan Bice revealed the Chief-of-Staff approved a promotion and significant pay raise for her significant other — a 80% pay raise in four years.

While Wisconsin taxpayers deserve transparency, Evers wants a coverup. When asked by Bice about whether or not his Chief-of-Staff approved a significant pay raise for her subordinate-significant other, Evers responded with some choice words. Evers told Bice that the potential for taxpayer dollars to create a damaging work setting in the Governor's office is none of "anybody's [goddamn business.](#)"

Over the Labor Day weekend, another reporter also asked Evers about the situation. [Evers doubled down](#) on not having an office policy for supervisor-subordinate relationships; Evers says these policies "[invade people's privacy.](#)"

While Evers claims it's unnecessary for his office, even several Democrats told the Journal Sentinel otherwise.

**Reporters: Have you asked other Wisconsin Democrat Leaders about their workplace policies? Do Tammy Baldwin or Josh Kaul believe Wisconsin taxpayers should be on the line for Evers' Chief of Staff's partner's 80% pay raise?**

## **Bice: Evers says it's nobody's business if supervisors in his office date subordinates**

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Dan Bice

"I would think it'd be wise ... to prohibit romantic relationships within the chain of command," said Joshua Goodbaum, a leading employment and labor attorney based in Connecticut who has sued many employers over failed office romances. "It's just a recipe for disaster in my view."

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Gov. Tony Evers acknowledged that his office doesn't restrict supervisors from engaging in consensual romantic relationships with the staffers they oversee. Evers, a second-term Democrat, said he keeps a close eye on what is going on in his office, which has some 37 employees.

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But a handful of Democrats have spoken to the Journal Sentinel in recent weeks to express their concerns that Maggie Gau, Evers' powerful chief of staff, is — from all appearances — in a longtime romantic relationship with another senior employee whom she directly supervises.

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"I don't think it's anybody's goddamn business," Evers said. "That's the bottom line."

Sources said the relationship was creating a difficult environment in Evers' office, especially because they believe no one can raise concerns to Gau about her partner. Asked about this, the governor said, "That's not accurate. It's as simple as that. No way."

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Last week, in response to questions from the Journal Sentinel Evers' office issued a 1,300-word response when asked if Gau was in a romantic or sexual relationship with a particular subordinate on her staff. The statement skirted the issue of whether the pair of Evers' employees are dating.

The two staffers have lived together for at least a couple of years, according to state records. Sources close to the pair say the two are very private individuals but that their relationship is a “poorly kept secret.”

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The statement went on to say that the subordinate was appointed to a deputy’s position at a pay of \$62,000 a year in January 2019, a position that did not report directly to Gau but was still under her chain of command. The staffer was promoted by Evers to a top-level position that does report to Gau on Nov. 8, 2020, with an annual salary of \$100,006. That pay was boosted to \$112,008 per year in January — an 80% pay increase in four years.

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The University of Wisconsin System has [a formal policy aimed at ending conflicts of interests](#) “when UW employees, students, and affiliated individuals, in positions of unequal power, are involved in consensual romantic or sexual relationships.”

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Both houses of the Legislature have even stricter prohibitions on consensual relationships between supervisors and subordinates.

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These problems can occur in small or large employers.

In the past, Ploor noted, major firms like McDonald’s and CNN have [ousted top officials](#) over [undisclosed office romances](#).

In Milwaukee, former Mayor John Norquist was [forced from office and settled a sexual harassment complaint](#) with a former employee for \$375,000 in 2002. The staffer contended what began as a consensual sexual relationship turned into sexual harassment when she tried to break things off.

More recently, Maine Attorney General Aaron Frey acknowledged that he has been in a relationship with a worker whom he supervised for months, and he said his delay in disclosing it was an “error in judgment.” His office had [no policy on consensual relationships](#).

Goodbaum said even a consensual relationship with a boss can create problems for a worker and others in the workplace. These relationships can lead to a sense of favoritism or alienation. Coworkers might conclude the subordinate is also protected from disciplinary action.

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Read [more here](#).