

Karas campaign: Launches “Badger Grift and Spend” Award; first target: Electric bill sales tax elimination

Posted on Monday, Feb 23, 2026

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Muskego, WI — Wisconsin Secretary of State candidate Pete Karas today announced the launch of a new accountability initiative — the “Badger Grift and Spend” Award — highlighting government decisions that shift public costs while protecting entrenched political or corporate interests.

The first award is being given to the bipartisan decision to eliminate Wisconsin’s sales tax on electric bills.

“Politicians called this tax relief,” Karas said. “But in reality, it functioned as a corporate subsidy that protected utility profits while draining public revenue.”

Karas said that if lawmakers had wanted to meaningfully lower costs for families, they could have required regulated utilities to reduce their base rates. Instead, the state eliminated sales tax, leaving the utilities’ profit structure untouched while reducing funding available for schools, infrastructure, and essential services.

“That’s the pattern we’re calling out with the ‘Badger Grift and Spend’ Award,” Karas said. “Government leaders avoid confronting powerful interests, public revenue disappears, and everyday taxpayers are left holding the bag.”

“That’s the core issue,” Karas said. “Consumers see a slightly smaller bill, but the underlying monopoly pricing system stays exactly the same. The public pays for it indirectly through lost revenue, while state-enabled corporate earnings remain protected.”

Karas emphasized that the decision was supported by both Republicans and

Democrats.

“Republicans framed it as tax relief. Democrats framed it as affordability,” Karas said. “But neither party challenged monopoly utility pricing. Neither party pushed to reduce guaranteed profit margins. When corporate interests are involved, the two-party system almost always finds a way to protect the status quo.”

The Karas campaign said the award will be issued regularly to spotlight policies that prioritize political convenience or corporate stability over structural reform.

“Wisconsinites deserve transparency about how decisions are really made,” Karas said. “Too often, headline-friendly policies hide the fact that the underlying system never changes.”

Karas, running as a third-party candidate under the Wisconsin Green Party, said the initiative reflects his broader campaign message.

“This is exactly why independent voices are needed,” he said. “When both parties repeatedly deliver the same outcomes of public cost and private gain, it’s time to challenge the system itself. The ‘Badger Grift and Spend’ Award is about calling that out, loudly and clearly.”