



WED PM Update -- 22 Oct. 2014

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-- Gov. Scott Walker said today that no state business is being conducted via personal emails, as he continued to face scrutiny over thousands of newly released documents having to do with how he ran Milwaukee County as county executive from 2002-2010.

"There is not, has not, been any state business conducted that way," said Walker, when asked if personal emails are involved in his current administration.

At a press conference in Milwaukee this morning, Walker declined to discuss specifics of the Doe emails, some of which indicated his aides used personal accounts to discuss county business with Walker and others.

"I can spend my time looking through those or I can choose to be governor," Walker said. "I choose to be governor instead of looking through all these items."

In one of the released emails, sent after the 2010 gov's race on Nov. 24, 2010, Cynthia Archer, then Walker's administration director, refers to right-to-work legislation and asks Walker: "(Are you) going to do this?" The documents do not appear to include a response from Walker.

Today the gov told a reporter -- who asked if Walker had been considering right-to-work measures at the time -- that he is focusing on other issues, including his accomplishments in office.

"I don't need distractions related to reopening Act 10 or right-to-work," said Walker. "I'm going to press the Legislature not to bring those to me."

"We finally got things settled the last two years," Walker added.

Asked about emails that revealed back-and-forth communication between Walker's then-campaign treasurer John Hiller and Walker's staff over his bid to house the Milwaukee County Department of Aging in the Reuss Federal Plaza, Walker today denied that Hiller, who had a financial stake in the deal, was shown favoritism.

Walker said Hiller did not get the bid in the end because "I opted to go with county property."

"The Democratic DA has looked at this issue for two years," said Walker. "He closed that case."

-- During a conference call, Dem Party Chairman Mike Tate said that the latest round of documents provided additional information about things like the dealings with Hiller, "but largely these documents confirm what we already know."

"Scott Walker seems to operate as if the law does not apply to him," Tate said.

Tate said that at best, the emails show Walker "ran his office in a very unethical way."

"We have no reason to believe that's changed," Tate said. "Do we want four more years of every few months another group of emails just discussing nefarious activity Scott Walker signed off on."

Walker has questioned whether partisan motives were behind the timing of the release, which came just two weeks before the election.

Tate said it was "absurd" for Walker to question Milwaukee Co. Exec. Chris Abele's integrity on the manner.

"I think it is absurd to question Chris Abele's integrity when you are the governor who has had any number of your aides spend time behind bars for crimes they committed on your watch, where we see these emails where he is just neck deep in these really questionable and nefarious activities," Tate said.

He noted that Abele made the process for releasing the documents clear and passed responsibility for handling the release to the county's corporation counsel.

-- Walker told reporters today he will win re-election on a platform that highlights Wisconsin heading in the right direction.

Asked how he will convince voters that his administration reflects transparency, given the concern over Doe probes into alleged secret emails and improper campaign coordination, Walker replied, "One of the national organizations gave us recognition for being one of the most transparent state governments in the country. We just put in place an open book system that allows people to go right down to the dollar to see where we spend money in the state of Wisconsin. That's much more transparent than just about any state government in America."

-- President Obama's campaign event for Burke will be Tuesday in Milwaukee.

Her campaign said it will be a free, ticketed event. Additional details will be announced later.

State Dem Chair Mike Tate said visits by Obama next week and President Clinton on Friday are good signs for Burke.

"I think that it speaks volumes about the type of campaign Mary's running and the position we're in that we're going to have President Clinton and President Obama in here just days before the election," he said.

Walker downplayed the visits, along with those by First Lady Michelle Obama earlier this fall.

"Barack Obama came in for Tom Barrett four years ago; Bill Clinton came in for Tom Barrett two years ago," Walker said.