

EXCLUSIVE: State Assembly Democrat Leader Bills "Childcare" Expenses To His Campaign Fund  
By Mark Belling, WISN-AM

The campaign contributors to the top Democrat in the Wisconsin state assembly may think they are supporting his political goals, but they may be paying his babysitter.

The campaign disclosure statement for the first six months of 2019 filed by Democrat Leader Gordon Hintz of Oshkosh lists three separate expenditures totaling \$915 with the notation under each of them that reads "childcare." The payments are made to a payee listed as "McPhetridge" with an address in Oshkosh.

Hintz did not respond to an email I sent to him or a phone call to his Madison office in which I was seeking clarification for the payments. I specifically wanted to ask if Hintz is billing his campaign fund to pay for his babysitter. Presumably, "childcare" could include something else but if it is, Hintz isn't saying.

Campaign finance law allows politicians a fair amount of latitude in how they spend their money. Direct transfer of the money into personal funds isn't allowed and officials are not supposed to use campaign money to live on. But childcare costs are not specifically prohibited. Daniel Carlton, the administrator of the Wisconsin Ethics Commission, says childcare expenses can be charged to a campaign fund only if the expense exists solely because of the campaign or political activity. Hintz' requests came in the first half of 2019. There are no partisan elections in the state until the second half of next year. I found no other instance of a member of the state legislature billing his or her campaign fund for personal childcare expenses, but that doesn't mean it has not happened. Aides to two lawmakers that I spoke with say they of no one who is doing it. Well, now there's at least one: Hintz.

Hintz is the leader of the Democrat contingent in the state assembly. He was cited in 2011 for inappropriate behavior in a massage parlor that was targeted by Appleton police in a prostitution sting. Hintz that same year told then-Oshkosh Republican Assemblyman Michelle Litjens "you're dead" after her support for Act 10.

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