



Informational Memorandum

from the Legislative
Reference Bureau

Informational Memorandum 95-4

July 6, 1995

WISCONSIN LEGISLATORS ACCUSED OF WRONGDOING, 1939 – 1995

This listing of Wisconsin legislators accused of wrongdoing includes only publicly reported incidents involving incumbents and does not purport to be comprehensive. It was compiled from news articles contained in the LRB clippings collection (Call Number 328.14) and Wisconsin Ethics Board Publication Eth 622, *Complaints and Investigations Under Wisconsin's Ethics Code, 1985-1989*. The listing begins with 1939 reports because reliable information is not available for prior incidents. It excludes motor vehicle speeding offenses.

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID PLOMBON

1995

Violation Alleged: Jailed on June 23, 1995 for allegedly violating conditions of probation stemming from a previous conviction for marijuana possession.

Result: At his request probation was revoked and he was resentenced on July 5, 1995 for misdemeanor conviction for possession of marijuana. Sentenced to 16 days in jail which was satisfied by 12 days time served and 4 days credit for good behavior.

1994

Violation Alleged: Charged with misdemeanor possession of marijuana. Was arrested after failing drug test ordered by probation officer in December 1994.

Result: Pled no contest. Sentenced to 18 months probation; \$1,812 in fines and court costs.

Violation Alleged: Charged with drunken driving (OWI) in February 1994.

Result: Pled no contest in March 1994. Fined \$486. Driver's license revoked.

Violation Alleged: Charged with misdemeanor disorderly conduct in incident involving his car and estranged wife in March 1994.

Result: Pled no contest in May 1994. Sentenced to 1 year probation and ordered to undergo assessment for chemical dependency.

SENATOR GARY GEORGE

1991-93

Violation Alleged: Failure to disclose about \$4,500 in political contributions and payments.

Result: Fined \$750 by State Elections Board in March 1995.

1991

Violation Alleged: Charged with misdemeanor battery and disorderly conduct in domestic incident.

Result: Acquitted by jury.

1989-90

Violation Alleged: Accused of ethics law violations for accepting money and airline ticket from lobbyist.

Result: Agreed in February 1990 to pay \$1,122 fine and perform 200 hours of community service in lieu of formal prosecution.

1988

Violation Alleged: Accused of violating ethics laws by asking for and receiving a free pass to University of Wisconsin-Madison exercise facilities in a complaint filed with the Ethics Board by Common Cause of Wisconsin.

Result: Investigation dropped by Ethics Board.

1987

Violation Alleged: Charged with violating ethics code by illegally accepting lodging, food and drink from a lobbyist in conjunction with a November 1987 Green Bay Packers game.

Result: Acknowledged violation. Forfeited \$350.

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID ZIEN

1990

Violation Alleged: Cited for reckless driving of motorcycle.

Result: Convicted. Fined \$79. Paid \$50 witness fees and \$30 court costs.

SENATOR BARBARA ULICHNY

1989-90

Violation Alleged: Charged with ethics law violations for accepting illegal gifts from lobbyist.

Result: Admitted to 5 civil offenses in July 1990. Paid \$6,137 in fines and court costs.

SENATOR RICHARD SHOEMAKER

1989-90

Violation Alleged: Charged with 5 felony violations of ethics, election and lobbying laws.

Result: Pleaded guilty to 5 misdemeanors. Sentenced to 60 days in jail.

Resigned from legislature as part of plea agreement.

1987

Violation Alleged: Charged with violating ethics law by accepting lodging and food in connection with visit to Chicago in January 1987.

Result: Acknowledged violation. Forfeited \$500.

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID LEPAK

1988

Violation Alleged: Charged with drunken driving (OWI).

Result: Convicted. Driver's license suspended for 6 months.

REPRESENTATIVE SCOTT FERGUS

1987

Violation Alleged: Charged with violating ethics law by accepting lodging and food in connection with visit to Chicago in January 1987.

Result: Acknowledged violation. Forfeited \$500.

SENATOR RICHARD KREUL

1987

Violation Alleged: Charged with violating ethics law by accepting lodging, food and drink in conjunction with a November 1987 Green Bay Packers game.

Result: Acknowledged violation. Forfeited \$350.

1986

Violation Alleged: Charged with hit-and-run accident.

Result: Convicted. Paid fine of \$399.50.

REPRESENTATIVE WALTER KUNICKI

1987

Violation Alleged: Charged with violating ethics law by accepting lodging and food in connection with visit to Chicago in January 1987.

Result: Acknowledged violation. Forfeited \$500.

SENATOR MARVIN ROSHELL

1987

Violation Alleged: Charged with violating ethics law by accepting lodging, food and drink in conjunction with a November 1987 Green Bay Packers game.

Result: Acknowledged violation. Forfeited \$350.

SENATOR JOSEPH STROHL

1987

Violation Alleged: Charged with violating ethics law by accepting lodging, food and drink in conjunction with a November 1987 Green Bay Packers game.

Result: Acknowledged violation. Forfeited \$350.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS HAUKE

1986

Violation Alleged: Charged with violating ethics law by accepting Door County fishing trip.

Result: Paid \$1,418 in fines and court costs.

1976

Violation Alleged: Charged with drunk driving (OWI).

Result: Pleaded guilty. Fined \$200 plus court costs.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN ROBINSON

1985

Violation Alleged: Charged with violating ethics law by accepting airline ticket to Chicago.

Result: Acknowledged violation. Forfeited \$1,000.

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID OPITZ

1983

Violation Alleged: Hit and run accident.

Result: Pled no contest. Fined \$356.

REPRESENTATIVE ROBERT BEHNKE

1982

Violation Alleged: Charged with two counts of second-degree sexual assault.

Result: Charges dropped when alleged victim ruled an incompetent witness.

1982

Violation Alleged: Disorderly conduct stemming from an argument over a State Capitol parking spot.

Result: Pled no contest. Fined \$25 and assessed \$13 court costs.

SENATOR DAVID BERGER

1981

Violation Alleged: Charged with drunk driving (OWI).

Result: Convicted. Fined \$200 plus \$33 court costs.

Violation Alleged: Charged with misdemeanor disorderly conduct.

Result: Convicted.

REPRESENTATIVE WALTER WARD

1980

Violation Alleged: Charged with sexual assault (felony and misdemeanor) of legislative aide.

Result: Convicted in June 1981. Sentenced to four years in prison. Defeated for reelection in September 1980 primary.

Violation Alleged: Charged with drunken driving (OWI) in June 1980.

Result: Pled no contest in November 1980. Fined \$144 and court costs.

Violation Alleged: Charged with two criminal misdemeanor election law violations by misuse of campaign funds in April 1980.

Result: Pled guilty. Sentenced to 30 days in the Milwaukee House of Corrections.

REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD PABST

1980

Violation Alleged: Charged with misdemeanor fourth-degree sexual assault.

Result: Case dismissed (lost re-election bid while awaiting trial).

REPRESENTATIVE R. MICHAEL FERRALL

1979

Violation Alleged: Charged with drunk driving (OWI).

Result: Convicted. Paid \$150 fine and \$23 court costs.

1978

Violation Alleged: Charged with misdemeanor misuse of state telephone credit card.

Result: Case dismissed.

REPRESENTATIVE JAMES LEWIS

1979

Violation Alleged: Charged with felony false swearing to a federal grand jury.

Result: Convicted. **Removed from office upon felony conviction pursuant to Article III, Section 2 (4) (a), Wisconsin Constitution and Section 6.03 (1) (b), Wisconsin Statutes.**

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN SHABAZ

1979

Violation Alleged: Charged with drunken driving (OWI).

Result: Convicted. Paid \$125 fine and \$20 court costs.

SENATOR JAMES DEVITT

1978

Violation Alleged: Charged with felony false testimony about campaign contributions.

Result: Convicted. **Removed from office upon felony conviction pursuant to Article III, Section 2 (4) (a), Wisconsin Constitution and Section 6.03 (1) (b), Wisconsin Statutes.**

SENATOR HENRY DORMAN

1978

Violation Alleged: Charged with misdemeanor misuse of state telephone credit card.

Result: Case dismissed.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH LOOBY

1978

Violation Alleged: Charged with misdemeanor misuse of state telephone credit card.

Result: Case dismissed.

SENATOR BRUCE PELOQUIN

1978

Violation Alleged: Charged with misdemeanor theft of bricks.

Result: Found not guilty.

SENATOR MONROE SWAN

1978

Violation Alleged: Misuse of federally-paid CETA workers in unsuccessful campaign for lieutenant governor.

Result: Convicted of felony and misdemeanor. Sentenced to 60 days in jail, 2 years probation and \$2,000 fine. **Removed from office upon felony conviction pursuant to Article III, Section 2 (4) (a), Wisconsin Constitution and Section 6.03 (1) (b), Wisconsin Statutes.**

REPRESENTATIVE MARCEL DANDENEAU

1977

Violation Alleged: Charged with misdemeanor violation of campaign finance laws.

Result: Convicted. Paid \$500 fine and \$10 court costs.

1976

Violation Alleged: Charged with felony misconduct in public office.

Result: Case dismissed.

REPRESENTATIVE PAUL ALFONSI

1968

Violation Alleged: Charged with felony bribery.

Result: Initially convicted and forced to vacate office – case overturned by Wisconsin Supreme Court.

REPRESENTATIVE WILLIS HUTNIK

1968

Violation Alleged: Charged with felony bribery.

Result: Case dismissed.

REPRESENTATIVE EARL ELFERS

1966

Violation Alleged: Charged with assault and battery.

Result: Charges dismissed.

REPRESENTATIVE GLEN POMMERENING

1965

Violation Alleged: Charged with drunk driving (OWI).

Result: Convicted. Paid \$155 fine.

REPRESENTATIVE FRED SCHLEUTER

1963

Violation Alleged: Charged with drunk driving (OWI).

Result: Convicted in February 1965 – case delayed due to legislative immunity. Fined \$103. Defeated for re-election in November 1964.

REPRESENTATIVE MARK CATLIN, JR.

1955

Violation Alleged: Charged by Board of State Bar Commissioners with violating "standards of professional conduct" by using personal influence and improperly accepting fees to secure the pardon or parole of inmates of the state prison.

Result: Found guilty in November 1957. Fined \$1,500 and disbarred by Wisconsin Supreme Court for six months. Defeated for re-election in September 1956 primary.

REPRESENTATIVE CECIL BROWN, JR.

1956

Violation Alleged: Charged with larceny – accused of taking \$75 insurance policy payment.

Result: Case dismissed when witness failed to appear.

REPRESENTATIVE RAY KUHLMAN

1956

Violation Alleged: Charged with drunken driving (OWI).

Result: Convicted. Fined \$100 and court costs.

REPRESENTATIVE ROBERT LYNCH

1954

Violation Alleged: Charged with careless operation of a motor vehicle resulting in a 4-car crash.

Result: Convicted. Fined \$10 and court costs.

REPRESENTATIVE HAROLD GADE

1952

Violation Alleged: Charged with six counts of embezzling a total of over \$36,000 entrusted to him as treasurer of a credit union.

Result: Pleaded guilty. Sentenced to concurrent one-to-five year prison terms on each count.

Resigned seat the week prior to conviction.

REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD STEFFENS

1949

Violation Alleged: Charged with intentionally making false statements about campaign opponent.

Result: Charges found groundless by state attorney general.

SENATOR EVERETT LAFOND

1948

Violation Alleged: Charged with obstructing and resisting conservation wardens in the performance of their duties.

Result: Pleaded guilty. Sentenced to fine of \$100 or 30 days in jail.

REPRESENTATIVE FRANK SCHAEFFER, JR.

1946

Violation Alleged: Charged with violating corrupt practices act.

Result: Charges dismissed.

SENATOR JAMES CARROLL

1942

Violation Alleged: Charged with assault and battery while attempting to evict squatter and destroying personal property (household furniture).

Result: Convicted on both counts. Fined \$50 and court costs or 30 days in jail on first count and fine of \$5 or 5 days in jail on second count.

SENATOR A.J. CONNORS

1939

Violation Alleged: Charged with drunken driving (OWI).

Result: Convicted. Fined \$100.