

**From: [Sykes Writes](#)**

**THURSDAY, Sept. 28, 2006, 8:47 a.m.**

## **OUR NIXONIAN GOVERNOR**

(Note: This column appears in the Madison weekly Isthmus.)  
By Charles Sykes

I'm sorry now that I once said Jim Doyle looks like a cross between a basset hound and Richard Nixon.

It was unfair to the hound and trivializes the Nixonian side of Doyle's character. Make no mistake, the chilling aspect of last week's banana republic moment at the state Elections Board was its Nixonian overtones.

"What's really scary about this," one business leader told me, "is that we now have a governor who is willing to use the powers of government to punish political appointees. This time, it's the Elections Board. Next time, will it be the Department of Revenue? The DNR?"

You probably know the story: In trying to rig a vote of the state Elections Board involving Republican Mark Green, a lawyer for the Doyle campaign laid out the strategy to Democratic appointees. The goal was to embarrass Green by retroactively changing elections rules and forcing him to return more than \$400,000 he had transferred from his federal account.

That sort of transfer had been considered legal for 28 years and when former Democratic Congressman Tom Barrett did the same thing, the Elections Board said it was perfectly okay. But the Doyle team, faced with mounting scandals, set out to find some way to accuse Green of being as much of a crook as the governor.

The clock was running. Doyle Administration official Georgia Thompson had been convicted of a felony for rigging a state contract to benefit a contributor to the Doyle campaign. (At her sentencing last week, she got 18 months.) The federal investigation is ongoing and the media continue a steady drip of stories about state contracts with suspicious links to Doyle campaign cash.

And so Doyle's lawyer, Michael Maistelman, reached out to Election Board members. The board then voted 4-3 (three Democrats joined by a Green Party rep) to ignore the advice of its own lawyer, George Dunst, who had said Green's transfer should be allowed to stand. It declared the transfer illegal and ordered Green to divest himself of the cash, just two months before the November election.

Almost immediately, Doyle began a television ad barrage attacking Green for his "illegal money."

That, of course, was the whole point.

In an e-mail the day before the vote, Maistelman advised one Election Board member that "the Gov's Campaign and the Dem party and others will give you cover on this in the media. Even if this ends up in Court it is a PR victory for us since it makes Green spend money and have to defend the use of his Washington DC dirty money."

In other words, it wasn't about the law; it was about using the board's actions to damage Doyle's opponent. The language could hardly have been balder.

Other e-mails recount how Maistelman got other appointees "on board" the plan to whack Green. At one point, he assured a supine board member, "I ran this by the powers that be and was given a 'green' light on this idea." The strings had been well and surely pulled; the supposedly independent watchdog had been turned into a plaint lapdog.

Much of the media have taken to calling Maistelman's involvement "lobbying" the Elections Board. It wasn't. The lawyer for the Democratic governor was giving marching orders to his party's appointees, who promptly complied.

This, in itself, is hardly news. In fact, it could be argued that it's perfectly consistent with the way this governor has done business. But who knew his minions would be so arrogant as to actually put it in writing?

Doyle's response has been predictable. He denied knowing that Maistelman was his lawyer (yeah, that's the ticket); seized on a story that a GOP official had also called a member of the Elections Board (apparently to ask, "Is it true the Dems are going to screw Green?"); and has continued to run ads decrying Green's "dirty money," while the dispute wends its way through the courts. In other words, the scheme worked exactly as planned.

As collateral damage, the gambit exposed the lawmakers (primarily Republican) who scuttled plans to reform the absurd practice of letting partisan hacks dominate the Elections Board.

But primarily, it gave us a glimpse of the new face of politics in Wisconsin. Doyle defenders have half a point when they note that Doyle did not invent aggressive fundraising or hardball politics, citing his predecessors including Pat

Lucey and Tommy Thompson.

What they gloss over, however, is how far Doyle has taken this – from the shakedown of companies bidding for state contracts to the casual cynicism of his political thuggery. It is one thing to use spin to cover deficiencies of substance, but Doyle has turned to outright deception and official bullying to cover up an ethical meltdown.

In 1972, Richard Nixon survived Watergate to win a second term. Doyle may well survive Travelgate and other scandals, but his second term could well turn out to be as eventful as his new role model's

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UPDATE:

I received this email from local consultant George Mitchell:

*Charlie,*

*Stepping back from the fray, it is just plain discouraging to realize if a straight arrow like Mark Green loses it will because Jim Doyle — of all people — prevented him for using legally raised funds. Walters' story today on the joke of an institution that is our Elections Board makes this all the more troubling. Doyle has raised more "dirty money" than any candidate for Governor...EVER...and he caps that off by rigging the Elections Board vote.*

*Think what it will be like in Madison for the next four years...and beyond...if Doyle is re-elected. He will have debased the office of Governor and gotten away with it.*

*George*

Exactly.

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**SATURDAY, Oct. 21, 2006, 10:27 a.m.**

## **DOYLE'S CASINO WHOPPER**

Listen to this post-debate audio, in which Doyle actually **denied getting any money from the Indian tribes**....The tribes he says "didn't make contributions to me."

If this is not the biggest Doyle whopper of all time (and he competition is stuff) I don't know what is.

Give it a listen. [Audio from [wispolitics.com](http://wispolitics.com).]

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**TUESDAY, Oct. 24, 2006, 11:50 a.m.**

## **THE DOYLE RAP SHEET**

**Bruce Murphy** has the details on Diamond Jim's latest sleazy deal...

Since the MSM is snoozing and the "watchdogs" are too busy licking themselves, the RPW has put together its own handy reference guide to the most corrupt governor in Wisconsin history.

It's a long post, so curl up in front of a warm fire with a loved one, and share.....

*Some of the many, many, many scandals of Jim Doyle:*

*\* Doyle remains under investigation by State, Federal and County authorities.*

*\* The Waukesha County District Attorney is investigating whether Doyle's campaign broke open meeting laws when they rigged a vote against Mark Green on the State Elections Board.*

*\* In the middle of a federal probe, Christopher Kelly, a politically connected fundraiser and top advisor to the also ethically-challenged Illinois Governor, Rod Blagojevich, gave Doyle the maximum allowed by Wisconsin law, \$10,000, on June 24, 2006. According to the Chicago Sun-Times, federal prosecutors list Kelly as "Individual B" in a 24-count indictment against another top fundraiser for Blagojevich, Tony Rezko. Rezko was recently indicted in the scheme to steer campaign donations to the troubled Illinois governor and extort companies seeking business in Illinois for profit. (MJS 10/13/06)*

*\* Gambling interests have funneled nearly another \$1 million in cash to Doyle, rewarding him for his 180 degree turn on the issue of casino gambling. (MJS 9/27/06)*

*\* Philadelphia Attorneys deliver \$10,000 to Doyle's campaign the same day they meet on state property with Doyle's top aide Marc Marotta. According to Doyle's own campaign, the meeting was arranged by Doyle's fundraiser. (MJS*

7/7/06)

\* *The über-liberal Madison weekly paper The Isthmus gave Doyle an "F" for good-government.*

\* *Doyle campaigned with the equally ethically challenged Bob Mendez. The New Jersey Senator is under a federal investigation. Democrats have even considered replacing Mendez on the ballot because of all his baggage. [www.bobsbaggage.com](http://www.bobsbaggage.com)*

\* *A company that Jim Doyle gave a no-bid \$685,000 contract to create a website donated another \$17,684 to his campaign. (MJS 7/24/06)  
That same company donated \$47,000 to Doyle's coffers before they got the no-bid sweetheart deal. (MJS 11/24/04)*

\* *A member of Jim Doyle's administration was convicted of two felony counts of steering a bid to a big money campaign donor. Adelman Travel should have lost the bid under the state's bidding process, but \$20,000 in campaign cash seems to have put them over the top. Doyle finally cancelled the bid, but has continued to keep the campaign money. (WSJ 1/25/06)*

\* *Two weeks after a jury proved his administration rigged the bidding process for Adelman, Doyle hit up the travel company for another \$250 in donations. (TCT 7/22/06)*

\* *An executive from the Hunger Task Force was approached by Doyle's campaign to give money, right after her agency submitted a grant application to Doyle's office. She donated and her group received a \$50,000 grant from Doyle. (MJS 4/25/02)*

\* *According to the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, Doyle has raised more than \$1 million from outside contributors, mainly from Illinois. <http://www.wisdc.org/pr071806.php>*

\* *Doyle accepted \$236,842 from a group trying to build a casino in Kenosha. Thanks to his vetoes, Doyle remains the sole elected official in Wisconsin who could approve the deal. <http://www.wisdc.org/pr071806.php>*

\* *At least seven companies who received no-bid contracts from Jim Doyle donated \$32,050 to his campaign (AP 2/14/06)*

\* *Taxpayers are paying a \$10,000 Doyle donor \$230 an hour to get money already owed to them by gambling interests. (AP 1/6/06)*

\* *Utility executives donated \$43,650 to get Jim Doyle's Public Service Commission to reverse an earlier decision and allow the sale of a nuclear power plant. State investigators interviewed PSC employees for several hours about the deal. Two of the three PSC members are Doyle appointees, one is married to his campaign fundraiser...another former PSC high ranking staffer is now working on the governor's re-election campaign. (WJS 5/10/06, MJS 12/21/05, GB PG 12/29/05)*

\* *On February 10, 2004, Doyle's chief of staff met with executives of an out-of-state power company that was attempting to buy the Kewaunee nuclear power plant. Doyle's chief of staff then called a Doyle appointee and key member of the Public Service Commission. Shortly before that meeting, executives from that power company donated \$2,000 to Doyle's re-election campaign. Those officials donated more than \$43,000 to Doyle - the bulk of the cash coming in right around the time of the PSC's change of heart.*

\* *Personal injury attorneys donated \$20,500 to Doyle's campaign in the same month that Doyle vetoed a bill that would have limited their access to jackpot juries in medical malpractice cases (WSJ 2/21/06)*

\* *According to the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, Crowe Chizek secured a \$6.7 million deal from Doyle and shortly after, proceeded to donate \$17,500 to the governor's re-election bid. Equis donated \$27,250 to Doyle around the time they were awarded a deal from the state that paid them \$2.6 million plus expenses including an unheard of 25% cut on property they sell for the state. According to the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, most real estate firms usually get less than 10% in similar deals. (TCT 3/27/06, MJS 3/27/06)*

\* *A yacht making company donated \$5,000 to Doyle's campaign right around the time it received a \$2.1-million state grant. (AP 2/2/06)*

\* *Jim Doyle continues to hang on to as much as \$45,000 from an improper fundraiser organized by DOT employees. (MJS 11/10/05)*

\* *Executives at a development firm gave Doyle \$8,000 two months before Doyle voted to provide \$13.2 million in funding for a project the firm was working on. The loan was the largest the board ever approved. (MJS 8/27/02)*

\* *A Hollywood producer gave Doyle \$10,000 just weeks after Doyle issued a \$250,000 grant in that producer's name for a pet cause. (MJS 2/13/02) An independent campaign watchdog called Doyle's spin "unconvincing" (WDC release*

6/17/02)

\* Gambling interests funneled one million dollars in the weeks before the 2002 election through the Democratic Party to skirt Wisconsin's campaign laws. The Party then spent most of that money on campaign ads for Doyle. Doyle then rewarded those gambling interests with unlimited, lifetime compacts. (MJS 2/20/03)

\* According to The Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, Governor Doyle's administration awarded an \$18.4-million contract for work on the Marquette Interchange to Chicago's CTE Engineers in February of 2005. Shortly after this, the governor holds an out-of-state fundraiser with CTE and three of its partners in the contract, that nets him \$20,000. Doyle's campaign also netted another \$12,000 from other Chicago area contributors that same day. The paper pointed out that most of those donors had never donated before. One donor admitted to not even knowing who is the governor of Wisconsin. (MJS 1/28/06)

\* A major insurance company donated \$28,500 to Doyle's campaign to get the governor to turn a blind eye to a controversial merger that created the largest health insurer in the United States. Several other states objected to the merger, campaign cash helped make sure Wisconsin did not. (MJS 2/5/05)

\* The Journal Sentinel reported in June that Doyle picked five of the 12 charitable groups that received grants from a \$6.3 million lawsuit settlement with vitamin manufacturers instead of relying on the advisory committee he established to make selections. Individuals connected to at least six of the groups chosen made contributions to Doyle's campaign for governor. (MJS 10/23/02)

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FRIDAY, Oct. 27, 2006, 9:36 a.m.

## [DOYLE BLACKMAIL](#)

**Fred D. has a scoop:**

Jim Doyle tried to blackmail the state realtor's group into backing him. Didn't work.

According to developer Mike Mooney:

*The short story is that Green would be as good for our state's economy and, therefore, our industry, as the best years of Tommy Thompson. Doyle would be the opposite. **He obviously knows his case with us is weak because he both began and ended his presentation to the Committee with threats that if the real estate industry didn't support him, or at least stay neutral, we would be on the outs with his entire administration.***

*After thorough review of the entire picture of each candidate, and **despite the political blackmail threats**, the Committee and, later the full WRA Board, overwhelmingly (35-2) voted to endorse Mark Green for Governor. The Wisconsin Builders and the Metro Builders have done the same. Threats or not, it was quite clear that this was the right choice for our industry and, really, the right choice for the economy of our state.*

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FRIDAY, Oct. 27, 2006, 10:27 a.m.

## [DOYLE'S LATEST SMELLY DEAL \\*\\*\\*UPDATED](#)

This story has been out since Tuesday. But still no coverage from the JS or any local TV stations.

**Bruce Murphy** reports:

*Quietly and cleverly, a new project is being created on the west bank of the Milwaukee River. Lots of strings were pulled to make this happen, involving at least six different government entities. Yet there have been no public bids and little public scrutiny of the development, even as companies that donated to Gov. Jim Doyle were chosen to build it. The whole thing doesn't pass the smell test.*

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JS TAKES A PASS

A listener forwarded Murphy's story to the paper, suggesting they might want to cover it, and received this response:

*Subject: FW: It would be nice if YOU covered THIS story*

*Date: Fri, 27 Oct 2006 10:08:11 -0500*

*From: TKOETTING@journalsentinel.com*

*Thanks for contacting us.*

*Journal Sentinel reporter Tom Daykin months ago reported on the building, the controversy it was generating in the*

Riverwest neighborhood, and the foundation that had been created to finance it. In addition, several Journal Sentinel reporters, including investigative columnists Cary Spivak and Dan Bice, subsequently looked into potential ties to the governor. They determined there was no story.

The Journal Sentinel has vigorously reported on a host of controversial issues on all sides in the gubernatorial race, including questionable links between Gov. Doyle, donors to his campaign, and state business they sought. But those stories had a tangible link to the Doyle Administration – scheduled meetings with Administration officials, email exchanges, complaints of backroom arm-twisting. In this case, there were no links.

Further, the story on Milwaukee Magazine's website claimed the City of Milwaukee issued bonds for the project. In fact, it is the city's Redevelopment Authority that has committed to issue the bonds, and taxpayers will bear no liability for repaying them.

We'll keep an eye on the issue, and we'll continue putting all such issues through a process of verification. That's something our readers count on, but some other media sources, sadly, don't bother with.

-- Thomas Koetting  
Deputy Managing Editor / Local News

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FRIDAY, Nov. 3, 2006, 8:41 p.m.

## WITH EYES WIDE SHUT

Maybe I am naive, but I am actually (momentarily) speechless.

In tomorrow's paper **the JS editorial board** gives Doyle an almost complete pass on ethics.

*On ethics, they both disappoint. Both should have spent more time on issues rather than sullyng the other guy.*

*On campaign finance reform, it's Doyle but by a margin that is almost too small to measure, owing to his virtual inaction on the topic.*

To write that **this is what they had to ignore.**

Stunning.

Ironically, in giving Doyle an ethical pass, the JS Edit Board needed to ignore everything their own columnist **Patrick McIlheran reports here:**

*There's the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee dorm, the construction of which was awarded in a no-bid process to companies that gave to Doyle's campaign.*

*Officials of utilities working out a sale of the Kewaunee power plant met with the governor. Nothing amiss; you expect the governor to have a say, though approval was up to his appointees on an independent panel. But the utility guys also gave Doyle's campaign about \$44,000 around the time of the decision.*

*The state's made contracts outside the usual bid process. Not necessarily wrong, but some of the contractors' out-of-state execs gave to Doyle around the same time. They admire his leadership.*

*And there's the bureaucrat who rigged a state travel contract. None of her superiors told her to favor the long-time Doyle friend, and Doyle later invalidated the deal. But witnesses testified that Georgia Thompson talked of pressure from above.*

*The common factor is the use of state power. Unlike a vote in Congress, which is what congressmen are paid to do, the Doyle links are in matters where state action should have had nothing to do with politics. The governor's name should never have been invoked, his campaign unmentioned. They are cases in which donors shouldn't be supporting a politician already on their side because, in these cases, politicians shouldn't be on anyone's side.*

*Doyle has explanations, which would go down more easily if he weren't troubling on matters outside the scope of ethics laws. How honest is it, for instance, to put 15,000 Milwaukee kids depending on school choice through three vetoes so the governor could use their plight as a bargaining chip? The GOP played tough, too, but it blinked, while the governor appeared ready to drive school choice off a cliff.*

*And while both sides' ads are mean, there are degrees of mean. Calling Green's vote for new depreciation rules a "giveaway to Big Oil" may be just hardball, but the governor also says Green "opposes stem cell research." Untrue: Green backs most stem cell research, including the kind that grew human liver tissue, the triumph of last week. He has ethical concerns about killing human embryos.*

*Ethics, schmethics: Doyle's campaign has said Green simply opposes all such research, a dishonestly broad accusation, for months.*

*Doyle's campaign has also made hay of Green's campaign-fund transfer made illegal retroactively. But a lawyer for Doyle's campaign coached Democratic appointees to the state Elections Board on how best to use the state's regulatory power to squash Doyle's rival.*

*A GOP official called a board member, too. He says he coached no one. Maybe. With Doyle's lawyer, there's no doubt: He e-mailed board members, "the Dem party and others will give you cover on this in the media. Even if this ends up in court it is a PR victory for us."*

*Not that any of this convicts Doyle as dishonest. It may be coincidence. He may honestly believe he's wielding state power for good ends.*

*But I think it smells. I don't have proof Doyle's dirty, either because he's clean or careful. But I'm not a court. I'm a voter, and there's enough flexing of state muscle in ways that help Doyle to make me suspect he hasn't just been loose with the truth in campaign ads but loose about public integrity as well.*

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**MONDAY, Nov. 6, 2006, 1:29 p.m.**

## **MISLEADING AGAIN**

Diamond Jim ends his campaign the way he has run it... by trying to mislead voters; this time on stem cells.

The Green campaign responds:

*"Just one day before the voters of Wisconsin will elect Mark Green governor, Jim Doyle continues his pattern of misrepresenting Mark Green's record in a last-ditch attempt to avoid discussing his own failed record and ethical problems..."*

*"As former Tommy Thompson has said, Mark Green supports stem cell research and don't let anyone tell you differently.*

*"Mark Green has been a leader in the search for cures. He helped secure funding for the national stem cell bank located in Madison. He voted to double funding for the National Institutes of Health. And he will invest \$25 million in exciting new embryonic stem cell technology that has the potential to move science forward while removing ethical concerns about this research.*

*"Jim Doyle supports human cloning. Mark Green does not. That's the fundamental difference between the candidates on this issue."*

Don't look for the MSM to correct the record...

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**TUESDAY, Nov. 7, 2006, 9:37 a.m.**

## **DOYLE'S PHONY SCANDAL**

The JS editorial board is in the tank for Doyle, so it was left up to the Wall Street Journal to comment on Wisconsin's political sleaze:

### **Wisconsin's Cheesy Reformers**

*Watching television this election cycle, you may have noticed that "campaign finance reform" hasn't made political ads any cleaner. You may also have surmised that money counts as much as ever; its sources and middlemen have merely been reshuffled. What "reform" has done, however, is make it easier for incumbents to keep power, and a case study is the Wisconsin Governor's race.*

*The challenger is GOP Congressman Mark Green, who has criticized Democratic incumbent Jim Doyle over his vetoes against tax relief, and has also kicked off a debate on education and tort reform. Or at least those were the issues until Mr. Doyle's allies used the campaign-finance laws to change the subject and create a phony scandal.*

*That story dates back to January 2005 when Mr. Green transferred some \$1.3 million from his federal Congressional campaign account into his state campaign account. Legally this was no big deal since the Wisconsin Elections Board has allowed such transfers for some 30 years. Only a few years ago, the board unanimously agreed to such a transfer for then-Congressman Tom Barrett, a Democrat.*

*But the elections board has long been a political animal, and it lived up to that reputation by holding a meeting the day after Mr. Green's transfer. The Democratic majority adopted an "emergency" rule requiring that money spent in*

*gubernatorial races be collected from political action committees registered in the state. In a stroke, this barred Mr. Green from using much of his money.*

*Viewing this as a naked political attack, the Republican state legislature jumped into the fray by suspending the rule. The elections board counter-attacked, saying the suspension didn't apply when the legislature was out the session. The majority in August ordered Mr. Green to divest himself of \$468,000 worth of transferred funds. And it took this outrageous step over the advice of its own staff attorney.*

*It's now clear why. A few weeks after the August decision, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel uncovered emails that a paid Doyle lawyer, Michael Maistelman, sent to three Democratic members of the elections board. In one email, Mr. Maistelman informs the Democrats: "We need to accomplish the following . . ." and then lays out Mr. Doyle's preferred modes of punishment for Mr. Green.*

*He also explains to the commissioners: "Even if this ends up in Court it is a PR victory for us since it makes Green spend money and have to defend the use of his [federal] money." He assures them that "the Gov's Campaign and the Dem party will give you cover on this in the media."*

*They complied. Governor Doyle has since had a field day. His campaign assailed Mr. Green, accusing him of "breaking the law" and accepting "illegal contributions." It called on the Republican to return his "dirty money." And so it came to pass that the Governor was able to turn attention away from other, more substantive issues by using election-money laws to create an aura of corruption around his opponent. It of course helped that any GOP candidate must lug the ball and chain of the party's baggage in the earmarking and Abramoff scandals.*

*Even the exposure of the stage-managed emails haven't put things right. Many voters have tuned out what has become a complex story about impenetrable campaign-finance regulations. And because the elections board hasn't brought suit against Mr. Green, the Republican hasn't had a chance to clear himself in a court case he'd surely win, insofar as any "crime" here was wholly manufactured by this politicized board.*

*We wonder what Senator Russ Feingold thinks of all this. He's the Wisconsin native son who, along with Republican John McCain, famously spearheaded the federal campaign-finance legislation of 2002, promising healthier politics. It hasn't worked out that way.*

*Instead, voters have been treated to the muzzling of political activists, the policing of the Internet by federal bureaucrats, partisan attempts to shut down opposition groups and spectacles like this in Wisconsin. This is reform?*