

RE: Full-time House Staffers & Campaign Workers

As a member of the House Majority Caucus, I want to share with you a concern and offer a proposal that I hope you will agree makes common sense.

In a combined era of term limits and a large House majority, Representatives frequently find themselves running in primaries for higher offices. Since a number of staff members for the House majority caucus come from the campaign ranks, this creates a unique and potentially destructive dynamic.

Given the nature of the legislative process, we must be able to trust that staff members who sit in on confidential House caucuses and other meetings, see confidential drafts of proposed bills and amendments, offer recommendations to leadership regarding bill referrals and the House floor calendar, and have access to other privileged information and discussions are not violating the trust of members by using such access for political gain as paid operatives for opponents of Republican House members.

How can members of the caucus not feel threatened when a staff person paid by your opponent is working in a Leadership office that has so much power over the success or failure of your legislation?

To eliminate these conflicts of interests and to ensure that the trust and confidence in our caucus leadership and our staff remains above reproach, I propose the adoption of a policy that prevents paid FULL-TIME House staffers from working in paid campaign roles as either vendors or staff members at the least AGAINST any sitting House member. Recent revelations in the press and in conversations among caucus members have suggested that Tom Smith has benefited by his current arrangement as Chief of Staff to the Speaker. In an article in The Missouri Times on May 28, Bob Onder suggested that Tom would be working for him in a yet-to-be-determined capacity (See <http://themissouritimes.com/4893/campaign-rumors-starting-early-in-senate-district-2-race/>).

I believe furthermore leadership needs to expand public disclosure of/or prohibit paid staff from working for companies, lobbyists or special interest groups who may have critical legislation before the Caucus. The conclusion of most including the media and public would be that outside groups are paying staff in key leadership offices for access to confidential information or special treatment.

Our Majority Caucus staff members are among the highest paid full-time employees in the legislative branch of state government; some are making close to \$80,000 per year. It is hard to justify why employees in jobs intended to be full-time, in positions of trust and confidence, making those types of salaries would be permitted to work in paid capacities against caucus members. The

private business world certainly wouldn't permit its full-time employees to moonlight for competitors in such a way, so why should we?

I understand that employees have the right to resign their positions and work in any way or for any candidate they wish, which we cannot control. And I also understand that we cannot dictate how part-time employees who earn less than State Reps can make the rest of their living, so I would limit this requirement to all current and future full-time staffers, who would maintain their ability to work for candidates and campaigns not aligned against any current or sitting House members (where the confidentiality and risk of conflict lie).

With this rule in place, we will maintain the trust and confidence that is essential for our House Majority Caucus to remain strong, united, and poised to make Missouri a better state. I eagerly await your response and am more than happy to discuss this proposal with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Chuck Gatschenberger