



WHAT THE WEDC MEANS FOR US

Back one day in early February 2011, before Wisconsin really knew what was happening, Scott Walker signed into law a bill that would dismantle the Wisconsin Department of Commerce and in its place create another entity called the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation—(WEDC). Walker stated then that the new law would send a strong message that state government would be working closely with private economic development interests. Indeed. In fact, the regulatory responsibilities of the former Department of Commerce—those pesky environmental and workplace safety laws—would be conveniently moved somewhere else entirely.

This new “corporation,” referred to in quotes because it lacks a charter and license, would be structured like a real corporation with a Board Chairmen, Officers, and Board of Directors. The Board Chairman would be—you guessed it—Gov. Scott Walker him-



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self. CEO would be Green Bay business owner and political crony Paul Jadin. Other WEDC Officers would be businesspeople and campaign contributors Dan Ariens as Vice-Chair, Lisa Mauer as Secretary, and Foley and Lardner's Scott Klug as Treasurer. Other voting Board members would include 5 more businessmen and 4 legislators, 2 from each party.

According to initial reports, WEDC's aim would be 1) to propose economic development measures to the state Legislature, 2) to coordinate projects and facilitate information between local chambers of commerce and regional economic development organizations and 3) to administer economic development measures on its own accord and those assigned by the state Legislature.

Its sole purpose would be to create and retain Wisconsin jobs.

Jobs? Really?

State economic development corporations *aren't* a new idea. Indiana has one—and suffers one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation. And other such states aren't boasting much either.

Furthermore, **WEDC has the authority to use taxpayer money for speculative start-up companies that would see high returns with the state taking most of the risk.**

What we see here, besides blatant cronyism, is an attempt to corporatize and control a critically important public government agency and require taxpayer money to support it. What we also see here is another Walker power grab. Haven't we seen enough?

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