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## WALKER, GOP BREAK DEAL THAT CREATED AUTONOMOUS GAB

Madison – With one scandal brewing in Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker’s administration, Republicans today opened the books on a new controversy when they began dismantling a bipartisan deal that created an independent government ethics and elections division. At a meeting today, Republicans interfered with the autonomy of the state’s independent Government Accountability Board. The committee’s action will impact the rules governing Wisconsin’s elections, including a potential recall election against Walker.

“Today, Republicans broke a deal to bring true autonomy to the Government Accountability Board, scarring Wisconsin’s tradition of clean government,” said State Representative Mark Pocan (D-Madison), who helped create the Government Accountability Board in 2007. “The people of Wisconsin will not stand for Republican manipulation of what is supposed to be an independent non-partisan agency as promised to them by the legislature in 2007, for their own party’s political gain.”

Today’s GOP-led Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules pressured the independent GAB to change decisions that will directly impact a likely recall effort against Walker. The creation of the independent Government Accountability Board was the last major reform of Wisconsin’s electoral system. Original Republican opposition to creating a non-partisan agency cost several Republicans their seats in 2006.

“Not only did I vote for the creation of the GAB, but I helped negotiate the deal to help take partisanship out of our election and ethics agencies,” said Pocan, who toured state editorial boards with former GOP leaders Mike Huebsch and Mark Gundrum touting the compromise. “Today, the Republicans went back on their word, risking the independence of the Government Accountability Board.”

The GAB was created in 2007 after several attempts by Democrats in the previous session to create a more independent elections and ethics board. Previous to that, the boards had to get approval for funding from the legislature to investigate each instance of legislative wrongdoing, which allowed politicians to interfere with tough and fair investigations. Today’s actions risk the autonomy of the GAB, according to Pocan.