Johnson’s office connected to Trump's attempt to overturn Biden's election

By WisPolitics.com  
  
The Jan. 6 congressional hearings revealed a connection between Sen. Ron Johnson's office and the failed effort to advance a slate of fake electors to overturn Joe Biden's 2020 election win.  
  
And that could be an issue as Democrats try to unseat Johnson in a nationally important race this November.  
  
The Oshkosh Republican said he personally had nothing to do with his staffer attempting to deliver a slate of fake electors to former Vice President Mike Pence.  
  
The issue came up in a text thread between staffers for Johnson and Pence. The two-term incumbent is running for another six-year term this fall. In 2020, 10 Republicans in Wisconsin — along with Republicans in six other states — submitted an alternate slate of electoral votes in favor of Trump despite Biden’s victory. Biden narrowly beat Trump in Wisconsin.  
  
After the revelation, Johnson in a CNN video said a House intern delivered a package to his office meant for Pence. Johnson’s Chief of Staff Sean Riley, who is also a former Trump campaign staffer, then texted one of Pence’s staff asking if he should deliver a slate of fake electors.  
  
“Again, I wasn’t involved, I don’t know what they said, but somebody from the House delivered it to a staff member in my office,” Johnson said. “My chief of staff called the vice president: ‘hey we got this,’  
and the vice president said ‘don’t deliver it,’ and we didn’t.”  
  
Then Johnson expanded on his initial explanation.  
  
Johnson claimed someone from Pennsylvania GOP U.S. Rep. Mike Kelly's office delivered the slate of fake electors that Johnson's chief of staff tried to pass on to Pence.  
  
The Oshkosh Republican told conservative talk show host Vicki McKenna he was not involved in his chief of staff's attempt to deliver a slate of GOP electors to Pence during the presidential election certification process. He said he was "probably already in the Senate" when the list came to his office, and he was not initially clear what was on the list.  
  
"We couldn't even remember who delivered this to us," he said. "We didn't know what it was. We thought it was documents involved in the electors, once we got it. Again, I didn't know this, I was probably already in the Senate."  
  
A CNN reporter on Twitter said a spokesperson for Kelly denied Johnson's comments. According to the reporter, the spokesperson said Johnson's "statements about Representative Kelly are patently false. Mr. Kelly has not spoken to Sen. Johnson for the better part of a decade, and he has no knowledge of the claims Mr. Johnson is making related to the 2020 election."  
  
The messages revealed by the House committee show a discussion between Riley and Pence aide Chris Hodgson about delivering the electors.  
  
“Johnson needs to hand something to VPOTUS please advise,” Riley wrote.  
  
“What is it?” Hodgson replied.  
  
“Alternate slate of electors for MI and WI because archivist didn’t receive them,” Riley said.  
  
“Do not give that to him,” Hodgson responded.  
  
The late June congressional hearing also featured previously recorded testimony from former state GOP Chairman Andrew Hitt — one of the alternate electors in the state. Hitt told the committee that the electors would only have counted if a court ruled in their favor.  
  
Democrat candidates vying for Johnson’s seat were quick to blast him over the issue — including calling for him to resign.  
  
Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes labeled the Oshkosh Republican a “danger to democracy” and called for him to resign immediately.  
  
“Ron Johnson actively tried to undermine this democracy,” Barnes said. “He literally tried to hand Mike Pence a slate of fake electors.”  
  
State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski also slammed Johnson, calling for his resignation and questioning if he had asked for a pardon from former President Trump.  
  
“There it is. Ron Johnson was directly involved in the attempt to overturn the 2020 election and overrule the will of Wisconsin voters,” Godlewski said on Twitter. “He is a threat to our democracy and a disgrace to our state.”  
  
Alex Lasry, who is on leave from his post with the Milwaukee Bucks, called Johnson a “seditious traitor” and “a danger to democracy.”  
  
“If we continue to allow him to answer to no one, the attacks on our democracy and our communities will continue to grow,” Lasry said.  
  
Outagamie County Executive Tom Nelson again called for the committee to subpoena Johnson, for the U.S. Dept. of Justice to investigate Johnson’s role in efforts to subvert the 2020 election results, and for Johnson to resign.  
  
Nelson said the evidence revealed “the full extent of how much Ron Johnson was the ‘go-to guy for insurrection among the Trump plotters'” and “how he himself was prepared to subvert our democracy.”  
  
The Democratic primary is Aug. 9.

For more, go to [www.wispolitics.com](http://www.wispolitics.com)

*The Capitol Report is written by editorial staff at WisPolitics.com, a nonpartisan, Madison-based news service that specializes in coverage of government and politics, and is distributed for publication by members of the Wisconsin Newspaper Association.*

Copyright © WisPolitics.com