

Attorney General Kwame Raoul (D) and Speaker Chris Welch (D) Covered Up Harry Benton's Behavior

What did Raoul and Welch Know and When Did They Know it?

July 20, 2026

For immediate release

Republican Attorney General candidate released the following statement about the Kwame Raoul-Chris Welch-Harry Benton scandal:

“Kwame Raoul and Chris Welch have some ‘splainin’ to do. There are so many problems with the behavior of House Speaker Chris Welch (D) and Attorney General Kwame Raoul (D) when it comes to former State Representative Harry Benton, it is hard to know where to begin. We could also take issue with Benton’s behavior, if Welch and Raoul were ever nice enough to release the ‘top secret’ report to taxpayers about Benton that taxpayers paid for.

- 1. Kwame Raoul and Chris Welch chose partisanship over transparency. Published reports over the weekend say that whatever bizarre behavior Benton engaged in, the Speaker, and likely Raoul, knew about it in March 2024, eight months before the general election. Whatever Benton did, Welch was perfectly okay with it. Welch kept it a secret. He covered it up. Then he endorsed it. Seven months after learning of Benton’s indiscretions, Speaker Welch steered more than \$1 million into Benton’s re-election campaign.**
- 2. After Welch learned of Benton’s objectionable behavior, years of inaction followed. As the Chicago Tribune notes this “raises pointed questions about whether Welch’s office violated state and internal sexual harassment protocols it was legally required to follow, and whether a lawmaker whose conduct had been reported to leadership was allowed to continue for years without consequence until another woman had had enough.” Where is Kwame Raoul when the people of Illinois need him?**
- 3. In Illinois, there is no such thing as a “secret report.” If an elected official engages in behavior that results in being forced to resign, the voters who elected him and the taxpayers who paid for the “secret report” have an absolute right to know every word in the report, minus whatever redactions need to be made to protect the victims. Where is Kwame Raoul when we need him? Raoul needs to direct that this report be released to the public. Now.**
- 4. Published reports also say that Speaker Welch may have engaged in creepy behavior of his own. A young woman who filed a complaint against Benton, and who also formerly worked for Speaker Welch, told the media that Welch made her “uncomfortable.” According to the Tribune, “the ex-staffer also provided screenshots from her mobile phone showing a series of communications with the speaker on social media and an encrypted messaging platform that raise questions of their own.” According to the Tribune, the ex-staffer posted several social media “stories” that “show her wearing different outfits..... Welch responded to each of those stories with an emoji displaying a smiley face with heart-shaped eyes. He also responded to a couple of those same photos with a second emoji of a face with its eyes and mouth wide open.”**

5. Now it is time for Kwame Raoul to step up for the people of Illinois, for once. He needs to force the release of the “secret report.” Then, he needs to launch an investigation into, as the Tribune puts it, “whether Welch’s office violated state and internal sexual harassment protocols it was legally required to follow,” and why a lawmaker “whose conduct had been reported to leadership was allowed to continue for years without consequence until another woman had had enough.” For eight long years, Raoul has never lifted a finger to investigate any fellow member of the Democratic machine. Now would be a good time to start. If he won’t do his job, I will after the November election.