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Get Big Money



Out of Politics!

October 2007

Edition No. 57

On the Web:
www.wisdc.org

A MEMBER OF
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OF WISCONSIN

Sounding out a call for change

People's Legislature bangs up a storm at the Capitol

Between 150 and 200 members of the People's Legislature, most of them banging pots and pans, took part in the "Storm for Reform" on the front steps of the Capitol on September 18, demanding an end to the state budget stalemate and prompt action on political reforms.

A procession of rally participants from Argyle, Beloit, Elkhorn, Franklin, Janesville, Lake Mills, Madison, McFarland, Milwaukee, Montello, Platteville, Princeton, Reedsburg, Waupaca, West Allis, Weyauwega and points in between went to the microphone to speak their minds about the budget impasse, the increasingly dysfunctional legislative process and the need for campaign finance reform and other political reforms. (Photos on page two.)

After the rally, participants signed individual petitions urging Governor Jim Doyle to keep his promise and call the Legislature into special session this fall to act on campaign finance reform, and delivered them to the governor's office.



Take Action.
Contact the Governor.



See the [insert](#) in this edition of the *Big Money Bulletin*



WDC director Mike McCabe makes opening remarks as cameras roll and rally goers keep time with pots and

If only you could hear pictures....



Most participants in the September 18 "Storm for Reform" rally banged on pots and pans. The People's Legislature member pictured to the left had a different idea. Yep, that's a circular saw blade and a wrench.

Oversight agency finds Ziegler committed judicial misconduct

What if any punishment will she receive?

The state Judicial Commission announced September 6 that it found state Supreme Court Justice Annette Ziegler engaged in judicial misconduct and recommended she receive a reprimand. The commission filed a formal complaint with the state Supreme Court, which will have the final say on disciplinary action against Ziegler.

The commission acted in response to a formal request the Democracy Campaign made in mid-March. WDC alleged that Ziegler repeatedly violated the Judicial Code of Conduct by handling

If the commission's recommendation holds, Ziegler's punishment will amount to what the Democracy Campaign called a "light tap on the wrist."

numerous cases in which she or her husband had a significant financial or business relationship with one of the parties.

If the commission's recommendation holds, the punishment will amount to what the Democracy Campaign called a "light tap on the wrist" for the newest member of the high court.

However, a three-judge "Judicial Conduct Panel" that is reviewing the commission's work before it goes to the Supreme Court issued an order in late September that expands the scope of the Ziegler probe and questions why the Judicial Commission apparently left stones unturned.

The panel has scheduled a public hearing on the Ziegler ethics case for November 19, and in preparation for that hearing the judges have given the Judicial Commission and attorneys for Ziegler three weeks to provide answers to their questions about Ziegler's finances, her handling of cases as a circuit court judge, what facts the commission knew about and which facts it relied upon to recommend Ziegler be reprimanded, and the timing of Ziegler's admission that she engaged in judicial misconduct.

They can't vote here, but . . .

Governor Jim Doyle is Wisconsin's top political tourism attraction as nearly \$1 out of every \$5 he raised in his first four years in the state's highest office came from donors outside the state.

Doyle got \$1.8 million of the \$9.26 million he collected over the four-year period from out of state, including nearly half of it in 2006 alone from donors who had never given to anyone in Wisconsin before.

To put Doyle's haul in perspective, former Republican Governor Tommy Thompson, who was elected to four terms and was the state's most prolific political fundraiser, raised \$1.18 million from out-of-state contributors in eight years from the beginning of 1993 through the end of 2000.

Seven couples – five from California and one each from New York and Texas – gave Doyle \$20,000 each, or the maximum \$10,000 per person. Fourteen other couples or families from outside Wisconsin gave Doyle between \$10,187 and \$19,750 and 40 individuals each gave him \$10,000.

One of the most notable of these large donations was a \$10,000 gift from Dawn Arnall of Los Angeles, the billionaire co-owner of Ameriquest Capital Corporation and wife of U.S. ambassador to the Netherlands Roland Arnall. Dawn Arnall and the couple's company have contributed about \$5 million since 2002 to President George W. Bush, Republican congressional candidates and committees and unregulated electioneering groups – known as 527 organizations – that ran attack ads against Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry. Ameriquest is one of the nation's largest sub-prime mortgage lenders to people with poor credit. In early 2006, the company settled a class action lawsuit for \$325 million with regulators in 49 states alleging predatory lending practices.

Doyle also took \$2,000 in July 2005 from Norman Hsu, a renowned Democratic Party fundraiser and former fugitive now in custody and facing federal fraud charges. In 1992, Hsu pleaded no contest in California to a felony count of bilking investors, but skipped town rather than face up to three years behind bars. Authorities didn't see Hsu again until a few weeks ago, when he surrendered to California law enforcement officials.

Midwest reform groups question presidential hopefuls on ethics

The Midwest Democracy Network, an alliance of 20 civic and public interest groups based in Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin including the Democracy Campaign challenged the presidential candidates in early September to let the public know where they stand on campaign finance reform and other democracy issues.

The network's questionnaire covering federal campaign finance regulations, ethics and lobbying laws, federal communications policy, voting rights and congressional redistricting was sent to the full field of candidates. The questionnaire is available online at www.wisdc.org/midwestdemocracy/mdn_presidential_questionnaire.pdf

"People can find out without much difficulty where the presidential candidates stand on the war in Iraq, health care and the environment," Democracy Campaign director Mike McCabe said. "But voters also deserve to know where candidates for our nation's highest office stand on issues fundamental to the health of our democracy."

Candidates have been asked to submit their completed questionnaires by October 15. Their unedited responses will be disseminated nationally through the mass media and a network of civic organizations.

A cup of joe, a better society

The Democracy Campaign has a new way for you to support two of your favorite habits – democracy and coffee. In partnership with Just Coffee, a fair trade roaster in Madison, we are offering "Ruckus Roast" coffee, decaf or regular, either ground or whole bean.

Twelve-ounce bags are \$10 each and can be ordered for pickup at our office a week later. Proceeds go to our advocacy efforts and are not tax deductible. To order, contact WDC outreach director Debby Meyer at 608-255-4260 or meyer@wisdc.org. All orders must be picked up at our office.



On the road again . . . and again

In recent weeks, spreading the word of reform took WDC staff members from one end of the state to the other, including Wausau, Hudson, Menomonee Falls, Oshkosh, Appleton, Milwaukee (twice), Siren, Baraboo and Platteville. Next up: Stevens Point, Wisconsin Dells, Eau Claire and Milwaukee again.



Outreach director Debby Meyer at the Sept. 29 League of Women Voters "Making Democracy Work" summit in Milwaukee

WDC director Mike McCabe at the 6th annual Fighting Bob Fest in Baraboo on Sept. 8



Another black eye for Wisconsin

Wisconsin's reputation for clean government absorbed another blow last month when Kenosha businessman John Erickson opted to plead guilty to federal charges relating to his role in a money laundering scheme that was used to funnel campaign contributions to President George W. Bush, Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle and Wisconsin Congressman Paul Ryan, among others.

Erickson is a business associate of Kenosha casino developer Dennis Troha, who pleaded guilty in July to two misdemeanor federal campaign law violations for making illegal donations in 2002 through family members to the state Democratic Party. Troha is Doyle's single biggest campaign donor. Erickson has given nearly \$14,000 to candidates in Wisconsin and just over \$8,300 of that to Doyle, but according to the federal charges also conspired to illegally funnel more than \$100,000 to the governor's campaign.



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