

Big Money Bulletin

Inside

Page 2

Influence Peddlers
Cozy Supreme Court Pick

Page 3

Special Interest Follies
Spreading the Manure Thick
Fore! Kohler Wants State Land

Page 4

Come to Fighting Bob Fest!



August 2016

Edition No. 101

On the Web:

www.wisdc.org

Good News x 4!

Dear Friend,

It's not every day when Big Money loses a skirmish, and when it does, that's cause for celebration.

First, just as we were going to print, a federal judge determined Republican lawmakers in Wisconsin tried to make it difficult for black people to vote and struck down in part aspects of our voter ID law, limits on early voting, and other election suppression efforts.

Second, the Department of Health and Human Services dropped a plan a few weeks ago to let private insurance companies take over the innovative programs that have been providing medical and home-care services to 55,000 elderly or disabled Wisconsinites for the past 15 years. It did so because disability rights groups campaigned hard against this plan.

They were able to prevail over the Alliance of Health Insurers, which is made up of eight private companies that already control two-thirds of the state's health insurance market. All told, employees from these companies contributed about \$682,000 to legislative and statewide candidates between January 2009 and December 2015.

Then there's this: On July 17, the Eau Claire County Board passed a law requiring contractors with the county to pay a living wage of at least \$11.68 to their employees. Raising the minimum wage is anathema to Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, and the Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce urged the county board to go slow. But the county supervisors pressed right on ahead.

Finally, another group that's not going slow is Wisconsin United to Amend. It's been instrumental in pushing a constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United* and to proclaim that a corporation is not a person and money is not speech. Thanks to its work, 75 communities across the state have voted by overwhelming margins in favor of such an amendment.

On Nov. 8, you'll have the chance to add your community to this list if you live in Decatur, Harris, Manitowoc, Neshkoro, Reedsburg, the Town of New Glarus, the Village of New Glarus, the Village of Osceola, the Village of Spring Valley, or Rock County.

For more info, contact my friend George Penn at geo_penn@charter.net or by phone: (608) 244-6436. You can read more about their efforts here: <http://wiuta.org/>.

Tell George I sent you. And let's have some more victories!

Best,



Influence Peddler of the Month

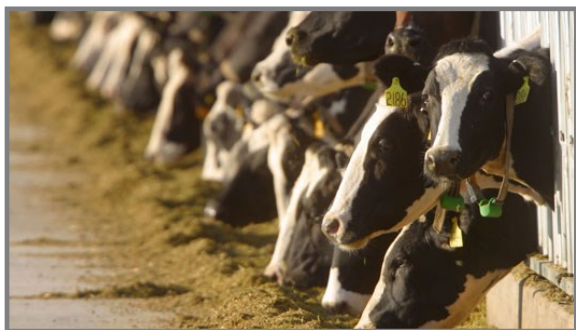
For **July**, this much-sought-after award went to **Eric Bott**, the director of the Wisconsin chapter of Americans for Prosperity (AFP), which is funded by the Koch Brothers to support rightwing candidates and causes around the country.

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign estimates that AFP has doled out around \$5.6 million in Wisconsin over the past six years, making it one of the top outside spending groups in state elections.

As director of AFP Wisconsin, Bott hailed laws approved by the GOP-controlled legislature and Republican Gov. Scott Walker that dismantled the state's 100-year-old civil service system, expanded the state's school voucher program, repealed the state's 35-year-old ban on building nuclear power plants, and scrapped the nonpartisan Government Accountability Board.

Bott also called a proposal to require dark money smear groups like AFP to disclose their wealthy donors a violation of free speech. He claimed it would breed harassment from people with opposing viewpoints.

Before becoming AFP's state director in June 2015, Bott, of Waunakee, worked for about two years as a lobbyist for the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC), the state's largest business organization.



For **August**, the Influence Peddler is the **Dairy Business Association (DBA)**, the most powerful agribusiness lobby in the state.

It goes to bat for factory farms, otherwise known as CAFOs (combined animal feedlots), which house thousands of cows or hogs and literally cause quite a stink.

It has dozens of sponsors, including such big-name firms as Foley and Lardner, Alliant Energy, American Foods

Group, BMO Harris Bank, and Monsanto. Together, employees of these sponsors have contributed more than \$2.1 million to statewide and legislative candidates, including more than \$710,000 to Gov. Scott Walker, in recent years.

The DBA spent \$179,045 on lobbying in 2015.

A Cozy Supreme Court Pick

On July 22, Gov. Scott Walker appointed Daniel Kelly to replace Justice David Prosser on the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

Kelly was among several lawyers hired in 2012 by legislative Republicans to defend their rigged legislative district maps.

Kelly contributed about \$2,700 between January 2004 and December 2015 to candidates for statewide office and the legislature. Top recipients included former GOP Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen, \$1,310, and current Republican Attorney General Brad Schimel, \$500.

Before opening his own practice, Kelly worked for the Robert and Patricia Kern Family Foundation, which has spent tens of millions of dollars on conservative causes such as school privatization.

Robert and Patricia Kern each gave Scott Walker \$100,000 during his recall election of 2012, and then \$10,000 for his 2014 reelection run.



Special Interest Follies

Spreading the Manure Thick

The owners of the factory farm that was cleared of violating state environmental rules by the business-friendly DNR gave more than \$30,000 to Republican Gov. Scott Walker over the last six years.

Earlier this year, Central Sands Dairy, with 3,800 cows, spread large amounts of liquid manure on 200 acres it owns near homes and a trout stream in the town of Grant. Some of it was spread even with rain in the forecast, according to Madison attorney Christa Westerberg, who contacted the DNR on behalf of area residents. But the DNR said the farm did not violate the law. Central Sands Dairy is owned by the Wysocki Family of Companies, which also wants to build a controversial factory farm called Golden Sands Dairy in Saratoga in Wood County.

The owners of the Wysocki Family of Companies, of Bancroft, contributed about \$31,000 to Walker between January 2010 and December 2015, including:

- * \$9,527 by James and Sharon Wysocki, of Custer;
- * \$4,500 from Russell and Diane Wysocki, of Custer;
- * \$4,500 from Gary and Elizabeth Wysocki, of Bancroft;
- * \$4,500 from Kirk and Jacqueline Wille, of Custer;
- * \$4,500 from Jeff Sommers, of Bancroft;
- * \$3,500 from Bill and Marla Wysocki, of Plover.



In addition, four other members of the Wysocki family gave Walker a total of \$7,850 between January 2010 and December 2015.



Fore! Kohler to Slice State Park

The DNR recently released a draft report that minimized the effects of a 247-acre golf course planned along the Lake Michigan shoreline by the Kohler Co., whose owner is a major contributor to Republican Gov. Scott Walker.

Plans for this high-end 18-hole course include using four acres of forest and wetlands that are part of the Kohler-Andrae State Park. Such an easement to use state park lands would have to be approved by the DNR.

James Buchholz, former superintendent of Kohler-Andrae State Park, said the DNR's analysis was "incomplete, lacks scientific study and depends way too heavily" on the company's "own very slanted studies and papers." He added: "There is no reason to take away public state park land and destroy rare sand dune formations and habitat" for another Kohler golf course.

Kohler Co. employees contributed \$58,165 between January 2010 and December 2015 to legislative and statewide candidates. Most of the employee contributions – \$46,000 – were made by company Chairman Herbert V. Kohler Jr. himself.

He contributed \$40,000 to Walker, \$2,500 to GOP Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch, \$2,000 to Republican Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, of Juneau, and \$1,500 to former GOP Sen. Joe Leibham, of Sheboygan.

Come to Fighting Bob Fest

The annual Fighting Bob Fest, named after legendary Senator Robert “Fighting Bob” La Follette, will be held on Saturday, Sept. 17, from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. at Breese Stevens field in Madison, at the corner of E. Washington Ave. and Paterson St.

We’ll have a booth there, so please stop by and talk with Matt Rothschild and pick up a *free*

Wisconsin Democracy Campaign flashlight keychain — help us shine light on dark money in Wisconsin politics.

See you there!



Support Our Work!

We depend on tax-deductible gifts from people like you so we can keep tracking the money that is distorting our politics and keep championing urgent reforms so that everyone’s voice is heard and everyone’s vote is counted.

Please send us a gift today. It’s easy: Just go to our website at wisdc.org, or you can mail it in the old-fashioned way at 203 S. Paterson St, Suite 100, Madison WI 53703.

Thanks!



200 S Paterson St. Suite 100
Madison, WI 53703

608 255-4260
www.wisdc.org



Find us on
Facebook



follow us on
twitter