



# Big Money Bulletin

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## Annual Meeting Wrap-up: Defending the Public Good

Dear Friend,

If you weren't among the folks who came to our annual get-together on May 22, here were some of the highlights.

Kim Wright, the executive director of Midwest Environmental Advocates, told the crowd: "We can't have a clean water future if we don't have an effective and accountable government, and the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign is a great resource for all of us in that regard."



Deshawn McKinney, president of the UW-Madison Wisconsin Union, performed three of his powerful spoken word pieces, and, introducing another one, said: "Inherent to the ideals of democracy is the idea of the common good, the greater good, the public good."

Kevin Kennedy, the former head of the Government Accountability Board and the state's chief election official, recounted the history of clean government in Wisconsin – and hailed you for your dedication to this cause. "It is your involvement in the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign," he said, "that will be the catalyst to reinvigorating Wisconsin and to freeing us from the quagmire of selfishness and shortsightedness that has engulfed our government since 2011."



Longtime members Kristi and Roger Williams were also generous with their praise for our work, and urged you to join them in providing for the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign in your planned giving.

When the speeches were done, we had a lively question-and-answer period, and I hope everyone left with their batteries recharged. I know mine were. See you next year, if not sooner!

*Math*

## Influence Peddler

Our June honoree, if you can call it that, is the **Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce**, which has spent or funneled more than \$2.4 million since 2010 on elections and lobbying activities to push pro-business policies at the expense of workers and consumers.



Republican legislative and statewide candidates have been the Milwaukee chamber's chief beneficiaries, particularly Gov. Scott Walker. The governor has received about \$1.5 million in campaign contributions and election backing through the group, which claims 1,800 Milwaukee-area business members.

The business group has given more than \$1.9 million since 2010 to federal 527 electioneering groups, and almost all of that went to Republican groups, such the Republican Governors Association, which got \$1,343,000 and the Republican State Leadership Committee, which got \$406,000.

In addition to funneling money to outside electioneering groups, the Milwaukee business group's political action committee (PAC) and conduit, which bundles direct individual donations to candidates, contributed nearly \$154,000 between January 2010 and December 2016 to legislative and statewide candidates. The vast majority of the contributions, nearly \$150,500, went to Republicans. Here are the top recipients:

- Walker, \$30,675
- GOP Sen. Alberta Darling, of River Hills, \$21,250
- Republican Assembly Campaign Committee, \$14,000
- GOP Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, of Juneau, \$12,250.

## Fair Maps Movement Gains Momentum

The momentum for getting fair political maps in Wisconsin keeps gaining speed.

At the Jefferson County Board meeting on May 9, the board overwhelmingly voted in favor of a resolution calling for nonpartisan redistricting.

The Jefferson County resolution urges the state legislature to "pass legislation that creates a fair, nonpartisan procedure for the preparation of state legislative and Congressional redistricting plans, that promotes more accountability and transparency, prohibits the consideration of voting patterns, party information, and incumbents' residence information or demographic information in drawing the maps, except as necessary to ensure minority participation as required by law."

Already this year, eight counties — Dane, Douglas, Dunn, Jackson, Jefferson, Lincoln, Outagamie, and St. Croix — have voted by overwhelming margins that they want to see nonpartisan redistricting.

And in previous years, eight other counties have come on board, including Clark, Door, Langlade, Marinette, Portage, Taylor, Walworth, and Wood.

Our outreach and advocacy director, Beverly Speer, is helping to organize this county-by-county movement. So if you want your county to pass this resolution, please get in touch with her at [speer@wisdc.org](mailto:speer@wisdc.org) or (608) 255-4260.

### Contact your state legislators:

Urge them to back nonpartisan legislative and congressional redistricting reform. Legislation to do just that — Senate Bill 13/Assembly Bill 44 — has been introduced this session by Sen. Dave Hansen and Rep. Don Vruwink.

Also, encourage the committee chairs — Representative Kathleen Bernier and Senator Devin LeMahieu — to hold public hearings on these bills.

### Call the Legislative Hotline:

Madison: **266-9960**; Toll-Free: **800-362-9472**

### Or go here to find your representatives:

<http://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/>

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## Special Interest Follies

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### Exploiting Child Labor

Wisconsin's largest business group, Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC), continues its assault on child labor laws. This session, the legislature passed a bill, and Gov. Walker signed it, that says 16- and 17-year-olds no longer need to obtain permits signed by a parent or guardian in order to work.

WMC, which backed the bill, has spent more than \$18.6 million since 2010 on undisclosed outside electioneering activities to support Republican legislative and statewide candidates.

This is the second swipe at child labor protections in the last six years. In 2011, Walker signed into law a provision, also backed by WMC, that eliminated restrictions on 16- and 17-year-olds working more than 26 hours during a school week and more than 50 hours a week during vacations.

### Walker's Thank You Note

When Gov. Walker signed a bill that blocks the DNR from checking on high-capacity wells when they are repaired, replaced, or sold, he was just sending a thank you note to his donors.

High-capacity wells allow users, which include large farms, food processors, and frac-sand operations, to pump at least 100,000 gallons of water a day out of the watershed.

The powerful agriculture industry, which is the chief beneficiary of the new law, contributed about \$1.8 million to Walker between January 2011 and December 2016. Many of Walker's largest contributors in the agriculture industry are owners of factory farms and large vegetable farms, which sought the looser regulations, including:

- Brothers Steve, Ron, and Dave Buholzer, and their wives, of Monroe, owners of Klondike Cheese Factory, \$57,500;
- James and Annette Ostrom, of De Pere, co-owners of Milk Source, \$47,500;
- John and Keri Vosters, of Freedom, co-owners of Milk Source, \$43,500;
- Todd Willer and Megan O'Harrow, of Freedom, co-owners of Milk Source, \$41,500;
- Richard Pavelski, of Naples, Fla., CEO of Heartland Farms in Hancock, Wis., \$13,500; and

- Gordon and Cathy Speirs, of Greenleaf, owners of Shiloh Dairy, \$11,250. Gordon Speirs is a past president and current board member of the Dairy Business Association.

### Coddling Polluters

Republican lawmakers are pushing a bill that would give businesses that commit pollution violations up to four times longer to correct the problem.

The measure, Assembly Bill 264, would allow businesses that self-report their pollution violations to have 180 days to fix most violations, and up to 360 days to correct violations if pollution prevention equipment needs to be modified. Currently, businesses that self-report pollution violations have 90 days to correct violations. The proposal also eliminates the public notification and comment period concerning the violator's timetable to correct the problem.

The measure was introduced by GOP Sen. Duey Stroebel, of Saukville, and Rep. Andre Jacque, of De Pere.

Since he was first elected in 2010, Jacque has received \$12,675 from manufacturers, his top special interest backers. His leading contributors from this sector are:

- Robert and Patricia Kern, of Waukesha, owners of Generac Corp.;
- John and Lisa Dykema, of De Pere, owners of Campbell Wrapper Corp.; and
- Karl Schmidt, of Green Bay, president of Belmark Inc.

Each of the couples and Schmidt contributed \$1,000 to Jacque.

Stroebel, who was first elected to the legislature in 2011, has received \$9,050 through 2016 from manufacturers, which is also one of his top special interest contributors. Stroebel's top contributors since January 2011 among manufacturers are:

- Frank Stangl, of West Bend, co-owner of Weimer Bearing and Transmission; and
- Randall Groth, of Cedarburg, owner of Master Wholesale and Vending Supply, who each gave him \$2,000.

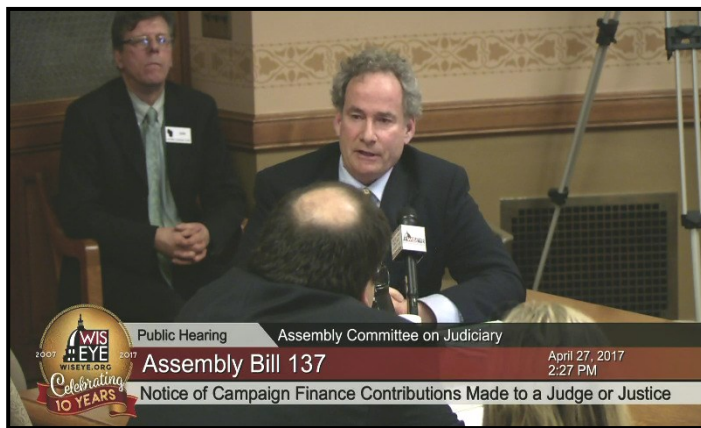
## Lawyers Ought to Disclose

Earlier this spring, we testified in favor of Assembly Bill 137, which was introduced by Rep. Gary Hebl. This bill simply says that any lawyer who is contributing money to a judge's campaign committee while that judge is hearing the lawyer's case is required to notify the lawyer on the other side of the case about the contribution within five days.

As it is now, judges need to report contributions only in their six-month reports or pre-primary reports and pre-election reports or if there is a contribution over \$2,000 within the last two weeks of the primary election or general election, in which case they need to report within 72 hours. So, except in very rare cases, one party in a civil suit won't know that the other party has given \$20,000 to a Wisconsin Supreme Court justice, or \$5,000 to an appellate or circuit court judge!

It's hard for the party that's in the dark to get equal justice under the law when the other party has just put a pile of money in the judge's campaign chest. This is an open invitation to corruption. It interferes with people's constitutional rights to due process. And it only serves to increase the cynicism of the American public toward our governing institutions.

Please urge your representative in the State Assembly to vote for Assembly Bill 137— see page 2 for contact information.



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