



wisconsin
DEMOCRACY
campaign



Big Money Bulletin

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On the Web:

www.wisdc.org



Save the GAB!

Dear Friend,

Wisconsin needs your help.

The Government Accountability Board is under savage attack by Gov. Walker, Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, and others in the legislature.

Why? Because the Government Accountability Board has just been doing its job. It's been overseeing elections and alleged ethics violations in a nonpartisan manner, and it cooperated, as it should have, in the John Doe investigations.

Walker and Vos want to make it harder to investigate elected officials in the future. So they're proposing splitting the board in two and putting partisan elected officials on any newly reconstituted ethics and elections boards.

We've already tried that, and it led to the Caucus Scandal of 2001, which brought down the legislative leaders of both parties.

***The Government
Accountability
Board is a
crucial pillar
of good
government in
Wisconsin.***

The GAB is a crucial pillar of good government. Please rally to its defense in this time of need.

Write an email or a personal message to your legislators demanding that they not destroy the GAB. Put it in your own words. Write it out by hand if you can. Ask to meet with your legislators in Madison or their district offices. (See the back page for how to contact your legislators.)

This is winnable. We can still save the GAB, but we must act now.

Please contact your legislators today.

Thanks,

Matt

Influence Peddler of the Month

In July, we selected the Greater Wisconsin Committee as the Influence Peddler of the Month. It has spent more than any other interest group on independent expenditures or issue ads here in Wisconsin since the beginning of 2010. The total dollar amount is a staggering \$27.6 million. It gets much of its money from state and national labor unions, like AFSCME and the AFL-CIO, and democratic ideological groups, like Emily's List.

Greater Wisconsin identifies Rich Judge as its treasurer on documents filed by its corporation with the state Government Accountability Board. Judge, who joined Greater Wisconsin in 2013, is a former chief of staff for Democratic Assembly Minority Leader Peter Barca of Kenosha and a former deputy chief of staff for former Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle.

For August, we picked number two on the list of interest groups: The Republican Governors Association (RGA), which has spent \$18.4 million in Wisconsin since the beginning of 2010. The association operates a state political action committee called Right Direction Wisconsin that makes disclosed independent expenditures. The RGA has also engaged in secret issue ad spending.

The top Wisconsin contributors to the association's 527 group in 2014 were: Mike

and Mary Sue Shannon of Brookfield, who donated \$2 million; the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce, which donated \$363,750; the Robert and Patricia Kern 1992 Revocable Trust, which gave \$200,000; and the American Transmission Co., which gave \$150,900.

State Supreme Court Calamity

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign denounced the July 16 ruling by the Wisconsin State Supreme Court to close down the John Doe II investigation into alleged coordination between Scott Walker and so-called outside groups. That ruling legalized such coordination so long as the outside groups don't engage in express advocacy—in other words, so long as they don't say, "Vote for this candidate" or "Don't vote for that candidate."

The decision is a field day for corruption, and an early Christmas present for the wealthiest Americans and most powerful corporations.

The decision makes a mockery of campaign contribution limits and disclosure requirements. Now any candidate can steer their wealthiest donors to "outside" groups, and then the candidate can tell that outside group how to spend that money. The kicker is that the wealthy donors can give millions to these outside groups in secret.

The decision is a field day for corruption, and an early Christmas present for the wealthiest Americans and most powerful corporations.

The decision itself was corrupt, since it was contaminated by outside spending on behalf of the conservative justices by the very groups that were being investigated.

Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, Wisconsin Club for Growth, and Citizens for a Strong America—all of which were reportedly embroiled in the John Doe—together spent more than \$8 million in support of Justice Patience Roggensack, Justice Annette Ziegler, Justice Michael Gableman, and Justice David Prosser.

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign has called on special prosecutor Francis Schmitz to appeal this decision to the U.S. Supreme Court.



Special Interest Follies

Walker, Legislature, Weaken Lead Paint Regulations

Majority Republican legislators and Gov. Scott Walker used the state budget to loosen the regulation of lead paint, of all things!



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "No safe blood lead level in children has been identified. Lead exposure can affect

nearly every system in the body."

But that didn't matter to Walker and the Republican lawmakers. They used a last-minute budget amendment to increase the amount of lead that can be in liquid or dry paint before state regulations kick in.

The real estate and construction industries frequently have an interest in any changes to lead paint regulations. Republican lawmakers, who control the Assembly by a 63-36 margin and the Senate by a 19-14 margin, received nearly \$1.7 million in individual and political action committee contributions from real estate and construction interests between January 2011 and December 2014.

Walker, who could have vetoed the lead-paint provision from the budget, received \$7.1 million in the same period from real estate and construction interests.

Schimmel Backs Polluters

Attorney General Brad Schimmel says Wisconsin will join a multi-state lawsuit against tougher federal air pollution standards, which are opposed by special interests that spent an estimated \$2.2 million last fall to help elect him.

New rules announced in early August by the Obama administration would require Wisconsin power plants to cut carbon emissions by 34 percent from 2012 levels by 2030.



Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce secretly raised and spent an estimated \$1.5 million on two television ads to support Schimmel during the 2014 fall elections. Other business interests contributed nearly \$750,000 in large individual and political action committee (PAC) contributions to Schimmel in 2013 and 2014, including \$10,650 from electric utility executives and PACs.

Even though Schimmel was elected to a four-year term just nine months ago, his campaign issued a fundraising plea hyping the lawsuit the same day he said Wisconsin would join it.

Public Cash for Golf Course

In June, Republican Gov. Scott Walker signed a bill into law that allows a developer who has contributed more than \$21,000 to his campaign and the state Republican Party to receive public grants or loans to build high-end golf courses.

The law makes a one-time change in state Tax Incremental District requirements to allow the town of Rome to provide direct grants or loans to Chicago businessman Mike Keiser to build golf courses and lodging on about 1,500 acres of land about 15 miles south of Wisconsin Rapids.



Keiser contributed \$11,100 to Walker between February 2012 and September 2014, and gave \$10,000 to the state Republican Party last October, about two weeks before the November general elections.

How to Contact Your Legislators

If you don't know your legislator's name or email address, go to legis.wisconsin.gov and just type in your address in the box in the top right corner, or call 1-800-362-9472. And snail mail still counts a lot, so please mail your letter to your legislators at these addresses:

Assembly: (last names A-L):
PO Box 8952, Madison WI
53708-8952; (last names M-
Z): PO Box 8953, 53708-8953

Senate: PO Box 7882,
Madison WI 53707-7882



Join Us at Fighting Bob Fest

Fighting Bob Fest this year is **September 19** in Madison at Breese Stevens Field. Go to <http://fightingbobfest.org> for more details. We'll have a booth there, as always, so please stop by and say hello! If you'd like to help staff our booth, please contact the office at 608-255-4260 or speer@wisdc.org.

***** **Donate Today!** *****

We're transforming the way the Democracy Campaign is funded. We want to be less dependent on foundation grants and more dependent on you and other concerned Wisconsin citizens. This way, we'll have a much wider base of support, which will ensure our survival and independence. So please send us a generous **tax-deductible donation** today. We'll use it in our efforts to defend the Government Accountability Board and to fight to get big money out of politics.



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