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DEMOCRACY
campaign



Big Money Bulletin

Inside

Page 2

Influence Peddlers
Another Power Grab
Celebration of Voting

Page 3

\$1,000 an Hour Lobbying!
The Kohl's Connection
From Beyond the Grave?
On Our Radar: Stay Tuned-In

Page 4

Contact Your Legislator
Come Hear Matt Speak



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Strangled by a Twisted First Amendment

Dear Friend,

So I was at a luncheon at the Madison Club on Sept. 10 that was organized by my friends at WisPolitics, and the featured guest that day was Attorney General Brad Schimel.

Jeff Mayers, the founder of WisPolitics, did a fine job of drawing the AG out on the issue of open records, and then Jeff opened things up for questions.

Not being shy, I raised my hand right away and asked Schimel about the State Supreme Court's decision dismissing the John Doe case, a case that Schimel had disparaged. I pointed out that the decision, which legalized coordination between candidates and outside committees, leaves in tatters our ability to impose meaningful contribution limits and disclosure rules.

And I gave this example: If I'm running for governor today, the most I can get from my richest supporter is \$10,000, which I'd have to disclose. But I could tell that supporter not to give me a dime but instead give \$10 million to an outside group, Americans for Apple Pie, and then I could instruct that group about what ads to run and what messages to use. And the kicker is, Americans for Apple Pie wouldn't have to disclose that my rich friend gave them all that money.

I asked Schimel: "Don't you think that's ludicrous?"

All he said was, "I don't think the First Amendment right to political speech is ludicrous."

"...this twisted First Amendment argument ends up silencing our voices, corrupting our government, and squeezing the life out of our democracy"

This perverse interpretation of the First Amendment is strangling our democracy. If there is no limit that we, as citizens, can impose on how much the richest people and most powerful corporations can spend during elections, and if there is no way that we, as citizens, can compel disclosure, then this twisted First Amendment argument ends up silencing our voices, corrupting our government, and squeezing the life out of our democracy.

It's happening already. **That's why we must amend the U.S. Constitution to say, once and for all, that corporations aren't persons and money is not speech.**

You can find a petition to do just that on our website at wisdc.org/get_involved/. Please sign it.

Thanks,

Matt

Influence Peddler of the Month

Our Influence Peddler of the Month for September was the **National Rifle Association**. The NRA spent \$3.6 million between 2008 and 2014 on independent expenditures to support Republican and conservative candidates for Wisconsin statewide offices and the legislature. Almost all of it -- 96 percent -- went to Gov. Scott Walker. Its spending went up dramatically -- 26 fold -- in this period. In 2008, it gave about \$100,000. In 2014, about \$2,600,000.

Our Influence Peddler of the Month for October was another issue-based group with a large and highly organized grassroots base: **Wisconsin Right to Life**. But it doesn't throw money around like the NRA. Instead, it relies on the power of its 50 local chapters in the state to flex its muscle. For instance, it spent less than \$7,000 total in the 2010, 2012, and 2014 races for governor to support Walker. But it still got its way with several restrictive pieces of legislation.

Another Power Grab

Three Republicans in the state legislature have redrafted a bill that would give enormous power to the Republican leadership over major state agencies.

Rep. David Craig, Rep. Adam Jarchow, and Sen. Stephen Nass are co-sponsoring **a bill to create the Legislative Office of Inspector General**. They tried something similar in June but it met with a lot of resistance, so they have redrafted the legislation.

This time it doesn't do away with the Legislative Audit Bureau, but it does install inspectors generals in major state agencies. Who will appoint these inspectors general? Republican leaders in the legislature.

The Joint Committee on Legislative Organization, co-chaired by Republican Senator Mary Lazich and Republican Speaker of the Assembly Robin Vos, would appoint them for six-year terms.

Republican leaders today (and whoever holds the majority in both houses in the future) would be able to further aggrandize their powers under this bill. It would authorize the Speaker of the Assembly and the Senate Majority Leader to jointly direct the inspectors general to examine any records of whichever agency they oversee.

The bill would also be an open invitation to corruption. It would allow the inspector general to review claims by any individual who has been adversely and substantially affected by an agency action or order. If that person were a big donor to the party in power -- say, John Menard, who hates the DNR -- there would be a built-in incentive for the inspector general to side with the donor, and not the agency.

A Celebration of Voting

On Sept. 22, we brought a coalition of groups together in front of the Madison City-County Building to honor **National Voter Registration Day** and to urge every citizen to get registered.

To register, you need to supply proof of residency, and if you have a valid driver's license with your current address on it, that will do, as will other government documents (including hunting and fishing licenses), a recent utility or bank bill, a paycheck stub, a current lease, or an affidavit from a public or private agency providing homeless services. Then take those documents with you to your city clerk's office or mail copies of them in with your registration form that you get online at <https://myvote.wi.gov>.

In addition to City of Madison clerk, Maribeth Witzel-Behl and the Democracy Campaign, the press conference included Centro Hispano, Common Cause in Wisconsin, Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups, Fair Elections Wisconsin, League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, NAACP of Dane County, People for the American Way, Urban League of Greater Madison, WisPIRG, and Wisconsin Voices.



WDC's Matt Rothschild with Maribeth Witzel-Behl, City of Madison Clerk, and coalition organizational leaders outside the Madison City/County Bldg encourage every citizen get registered to vote.

Special Interest Follies

\$1,000 an Hour for Lobbying

Expensive lobbyists are roaming the halls of the Wisconsin Capitol. Some 47 organizations spent at least \$1,000 an hour lobbying legislators in Madison in the first six months of this year.

The number-one group, Wisconsin Infrastructure and Investment Now, said it spent a total of \$329,180 on lobbying but only lobbied for two hours. That comes out to an hourly rate of \$164,590.

The number-two group, the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity, spent \$27,000 on lobbying but only lobbied for three hours. That's \$9,000 an hour.

The number-three group, Owl Eight LLC, an architecture and interior design company based in Milwaukee, spent \$108,278 on lobbying, and logged 22 hours. That's an hourly rate of \$4,922.

The number-four group, Monsanto, spent \$32,000 and lobbied for eight hours, for an hourly rate of \$4,000.

The number-five group, Northern Natural Gas, spent \$18,000 for six hours of lobbying, for an hourly rate of \$3,000.

The company that spent the most on lobbying overall was the Milwaukee Bucks, which shelled out \$482,496 for 208 hours of lobbying. That's an hourly rate of \$2,320. But it appears to have paid off -- and then some! -- for the Bucks, which got \$250 million in public money for a new stadium.

The Kohl's Connection

Executives from Kohl's Department Stores contributed about \$6,200 to Republican Gov. Scott Walker since the beginning of 2012. The company was awarded a \$62.5 million package of state tax credits from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp (WEDC) in 2012 to create jobs and build a headquarters that haven't materialized.

The state contract with Kohl's, which was the largest subsidy awarded so far by the Walker administration, called for the Menomonee

Falls-based national retail chain to create 3,000 jobs and build a new \$250 million headquarters.

But three years into its contract, Kohl's has created a net of only 473 of the 3,000 jobs promised, and instead of building a new headquarters, the company acquired and renovated space near its current suburban Milwaukee headquarters. The state contract with Kohl's for the full \$62.5 million is valid until 2023. So far Kohl's has received about \$18.3 million in tax credits for its job creation efforts and capital project.

Walker's \$6,200 in campaign contributions from Kohl's executives between January 2012 and December 2014 compares to only \$1,200 he received from company employees in 2011 and 2010, when he was first elected governor.

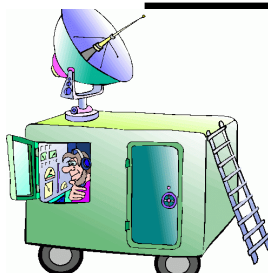
From Beyond the Grave?

Republican Gov. Scott Walker's latest state campaign finance report shows he received contributions from a California man who appears to have died before the contributions were made.

Walker's fundraising and spending report for the first six months of 2015 by his gubernatorial campaign shows he received two contributions of \$100 each on Feb. 18 and May 8 from Martin Anderson of Palo Alto, California. The report listed Anderson's occupation as "retired."

An earlier campaign finance report filed by the governor shows that a Martin Anderson at the same address as the one listed in his 2015 report gave Walker \$500 on March 14, 2012. The 2012 fundraising and spending report lists Anderson's occupation and employer as a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution in Stanford, California.

However, the Hoover Institution's website says the Martin Anderson who worked for them passed away on Jan. 3, 2015.



On Our Radar: Stay Tuned-In

The current legislature is considering bills that would further threaten democracy in Wisconsin. We're especially keeping an eye on bills that would destroy ethics and elections law enforcement by gutting the independent Government Accountability Board, and further erode regulation of money in state politics. And we're promoting a bill to take partisan gerrymandering out of redistricting.

Please visit our website at www.wisdc.org to stay up to date, and please contact your legislators (see back page).

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

Come Hear Matt Rothschild

Executive Director Matt Rothschild will be speaking often in the next few weeks:

- Oct. 27: West Bend, 7:00 PM, 132 N. Main St.
- Nov. 8: Ashland, 10:00 AM, Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center
- Nov. 10: Green Bay, 11:30 AM, Village Grille, 801 Hoffman Rd.
- Nov. 11: River Falls, 7:00 PM, public library
- Nov. 12: New Richmond, 7:00 PM, Ready Randy's, 1490 131st Street

If you'd like Matt to come talk to your group, just send him an email at rothschild@wisdc.org or call us at (608) 255-4260.

***** **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.



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