



wisconsin

DEMOCRACY

campaign

**ANNUAL REPORT
2015-2016**

Annual Report, 2015-2016

Dear WDC Supporter,

Over the last year, we took the word “Campaign” in our name literally.

We campaigned hard, with our allies, to educate Wisconsin citizens about the Voter ID law in the run-up to the Nov. 8 elections.

We led the campaign to urge three district attorneys to appeal the John Doe II ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court, and even though the justices turned it down, our effort helped educate the people of Wisconsin about the dangers of “coordination” between candidates and outside groups that run those phony issue ads.

One of those outside groups, Wisconsin Club for Growth, was working hand-in-glove with Scott Walker in 2011 and 2012. We’ve filed a complaint with the IRS against Wisconsin Club for Growth, alleging that it violated its tax-exempt status as a “social welfare organization” by engaging in electioneering as its primary activity. That complaint is still pending.

We’re also campaigning against the disastrous changes in our campaign finance law, including one that now allows sitting legislators to set up their own PACs and issue-advocacy groups, which will allow them to get around the limits on direct donations and to escape meaningful donor disclosure.

We’re campaigning, with our allies, for the fair and nonpartisan drawing of legislative maps—not the secret gerrymandering that so distorts our representative process.

And we’re campaigning, with our allies, for a fundamental solution: amending the U.S. Constitution to proclaim, once and for all, that corporations aren’t persons and money isn’t speech. Already, almost 100 communities in Wisconsin have endorsed this idea, by overwhelming margins.

We’re not slowing down, either. It’ll take a sustained campaign, over the next 5-10 years, to bring about the reforms necessary to make democracy flourish in Wisconsin.

**We’re up for that challenge. And I know you are, too.
Thanks for campaigning with us!**



Matt Rothschild, Executive Director



Accomplishments:

1. Presenting Legal Challenges

We filed a complaint with the IRS against Wisconsin Club for Growth. We also filed a complaint with the Wisconsin Ethics Commission against Rep. Dean Knudson, who set up his own PAC while still a sitting legislator, allowing him to get around the limits on direct donations and to escape meaningful donor disclosure.

And we urged the district attorneys of Dane, Iowa, and Milwaukee counties to appeal the John Doe II case to the U.S. Supreme Court because the Wisconsin Supreme Court blatantly misread forty years of U.S. Supreme Court precedent on campaign finance.

2. Testifying at the State Capitol



We testified at the State Capitol about our opposition to bills that were detrimental to our democracy: especially the disastrous rewrite of our campaign finance law and the dismantling of the Government Accountability Board. We also registered our support for efforts to overturn the disastrous *Citizens United* ruling, for nonpartisan legislative district maps, and for increasing voter access and participation.

3. Hosting a “Public Telling” in the Capitol

On the anniversary of the *Citizens United* decision, we and our allies in the *Money Out, Voters In* coalition organized a “Public Telling” at the Capitol about how destructive that and other U.S. Supreme Court decisions have been to a functional democracy. Congressman Mark Pocan and Assemblywoman Lisa Subeck spoke -- both long-time champions of good government reforms. Members of the public took the opportunity to air their grievances about the role of big and dark money and the road ahead for

reformers.

4. Speaking Out Across the State

We traveled around Wisconsin to give talks to interested community groups in Appleton, Ashland, Darlington, Eau Claire, Green Bay, Janesville, La Crosse, Lake Mills, Lake Tomahawk, Madison, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Mt. Horeb, New Richmond, Richland Center, River Falls, Sheboygan, Sturgeon Bay, Sun Prairie, Waukesha, Wausau, Wauzeka, and West Bend.



5. Spreading the Word Through the Press

We wrote op-ed commentaries that were published in newspapers large and small in Wisconsin, including the *Capital Times*, *Kenosha News*, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, *Urban Milwaukee*, and the *Wisconsin State Journal*. We were mentioned or quoted frequently in these venues, as well as by the



Associated Press, and we appeared in some national publications, such as *Bloomberg News* and *The New Yorker*. We also provided research assistance to reporters locally and nationally, including ones at *The New York Times*. Research Director Mike Buelow wrote 150 original news stories, which were often picked up by *WisPolitics* and *The Wheeler Report*.



6. Blanketing the Airwaves

Executive Director Matt Rothschild’s voice was heard often on the radio waves in Wisconsin, as he appeared frequently on Wisconsin Public Radio and several

Form **13909**
(August 2007)

Department of the Treasury — Internal Revenue Service
Tax-Exempt Organization Complaint (Referral) Form

1. NAME OF REFERRED ORGANIZATION: Wisconsin Club for Growth
Street Address: 1223 W. Main St., #304
City/State/Zip Code: Sun Prairie, WI 53590
Date of Referral: Sept. 20, 2010

2. ORGANIZATION'S EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 452218439

3. NATURE OF VIOLATION:

- Directors/officers/persons are using income/assets for personal gain
- Organization is engaged in commercial, for-profit business activities
- Income/assets are being used to support illegal or terrorist activities
- Organization is involved in a political campaign
- Organization is engaged in excessive lobbying activities
- Organization refused to disclose or provide a copy of Form 990
- Organization failed to report employment, income, or excise tax liability properly
- Organization failed to file required federal tax returns and forms
- Organization engaged in deceptive or improper fundraising practices
- Other (describe): This organization engaged in political campaign activities as its primary activity in 2011 and 2012.

stations in the Madison area, as well as stations in Appleton, Fond du Lac, Hayward, Janesville, Kenosha, La Crosse, Mt. Horeb, Rhinelander, Sturgeon Bay, and Wausau.

7. Appearing on TV

Rothschild also appeared on Wisconsin Public TV and local stations in Green Bay and Madison. Nationally, he appeared on The Real News Network/Independent World Television to discuss the scandal surrounding Gov. Walker's coordination with Wisconsin Club for Growth.



8. Going to Schools

Research Director Mike Buelow spoke to a UW-Madison Journalism class about how to use our database, and Rothschild spoke to a class at UW-Platteville on how money talks in the State Capitol. Rothschild also spoke at Edgewood College on diversity and at UWM on felon reenfranchisement, and he went to Mt. Horeb High School to talk to two classes about the assault on democracy in Wisconsin.



9. Working in Coalition

We provided crucial information to groups like Midwest Environmental Advocates and the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters on the influence peddled by factory farm owners and their lobbies. We highlighted the donations, expenditures, and lobbying by health care companies, and this research helped disability rights groups fighting to preserve their long-term health care options. We worked harmoniously with Common Cause, the League of Women of Voters, Wisconsin United to Amend, and WisPIRG, and we participated actively in statewide coalitions such as *Money Out, Voters In*, *Our Democracy 2020*, and *Wisconsin Voices*.



10. Digging Out Campaign Contributor Information

Because of the new state campaign finance law, campaign contributors are no longer required to give the names of their employers. But our Data Analyst, David Julseth, digs this out anyway! Our database is now more invaluable than ever: It's the only place you can go to get this information, in searchable form, which is necessary if you then want to understand which companies are getting all the goodies.

The screenshot shows the website's navigation bar with links for Home, Contact Us, Subscribe, Join Now, and Site Map. The main content area is titled "Follow the Money" and includes a quote from Mark Hanna: "There are two things that are important in politics. The first is money and I can't remember what the second one is." Below this, it describes the 1976 film *All the President's Men* and how the website's database allows users to track campaign finance data, including candidate profiles, economic interests, PAC contributions, and interest group spending. A sidebar on the right lists various database features like "Campaign Finance Database", "Candidate Profiles", "Economic Interests", "PAC Contributions", "Interest Group Spending", "Mobile App", "Walker's Top Contributors", "Hijack Hotline", "Archived Features", "Join", and "Donate".

You can't understand what drives Wisconsin policy-making without checking in frequently at the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign's website, because that's where the special-interest money is tracked and the context is provided. Accurately, concisely, fairly.

~James Rowen, Milwaukee

Year-End Giving

As you can see, we've had a busy year. With your support, we've held high the banner of democracy, and we've shouted ourselves hoarse for voting rights, fair maps, transparency, accountability, and, fundamentally, a political system where everyone has an equal say.

In a democracy, politics should not be a tug of war between a few billionaires on the right and a few billionaires on the left; every citizen should have an equal tug on the rope.

That's what we believe in here: a real democracy, and a Wisconsin we can once again be proud of!

So please send us a generous tax-deductible gift before this year is out so we can plan for the urgent campaigns ahead.

Thanking you in advance... and wishing you happy holidays!

~ The Staff and Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign



find us on [facebook](#)

follow us [twitter](#)

WDC Staff

Beverly Speer - Outreach & Advocacy Director

Evan Arnold - Development Assistant

David S. Julseth - Data Analyst

Barb Kneer - Financial Manager

Mike Buelow - Research Director

Matt Rothschild - Executive Director

WDC Board of Directors

Nino Amato

Marcie Brost

Peter Cannon, Secretary

Tom Hecht

Susan Lloyd

David Pauly, Treasurer

Mary Rouse

Diane Welsh

Morgan Young, President

Ways to Donate

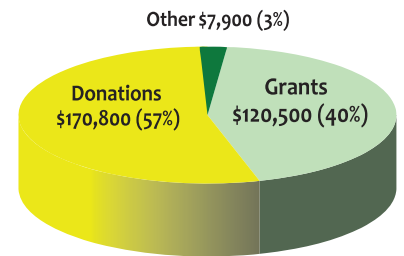


WDC's outreach and advocacy director accepts CSW's first Golden Ticket Award to kick off this year's The Big Share--CSW's online day of giving

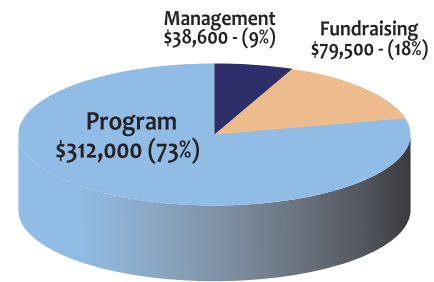
WORKPLACE GIVING • The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign is a member of Community Shares of Wisconsin (CSW). Workplace giving with Community Shares allows businesses and its member nonprofits to work together to build fair, just and sustainable communities. We receive 100% of all designated donations through CSW's workplace giving programs.



The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, a 501(c)(3) organization, accepts cash, checks, credit card donations, and bequests. Automatic monthly or quarterly donations can be made via electronic funds transfer or by credit card. Secure online donations can be made at www.wisdc.org. If you have any questions, or if you'd prefer to call in your donation, please give us a ring at (608) 255-4260. **All contributions are fully tax-deductible. Thank you!**



Income - \$299,200*



Expense - \$430,100

* * In addition to the income shown above, \$417,300 carried over from the prior year is available for current and future year expenses.

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE
PAID
MADISON WI
PERMIT #2783



203 S Paterson St #100
Madison, WI 53703

(608) 255 • 4260
Fax: (608)255 • 4359
www.wisdc.org
wisdc@wisdc.org

**2015 - 2016
ANNUAL REPORT**