

## Introduction

Our nation is an exception among other industrialized nations in the fact that our election process is ran by partisan election administrations. Government corruption tops the list of fears from the people. It is not ethical for Democrats and Republicans to govern their own election process and make their own rules for them and not others. Both parties have created this mess and now We the People must fix it. We've seen this as they pass legislation to protect them from campaign financing, hiding donations anonymously in 501c accounts and super PAC's, changing the rules for elections, and even gerrymandering. We need to remove their authority from our election process...We the People, By the People, For the People.

What is the Government Accountability Board (GAB)? This was an independent board that was created in 2008 that was responsible for our state elections, ethics, and campaign finance laws. It was led by 6-independent judges and all members were independent. The Democrats, Republicans, or any 3<sup>rd</sup> parties were not supposed to be part of this organization. The GAB solved election oversight issues, campaign financing laws, lobbying, and can fix gerrymandering.

Wisconsin had this organization for only 8 years, until both parties got tired of getting caught with corruption and fines, so they voted to remove the GAB in the height of the Scott Walker - Jon Doe corruption charges. Not only did they abolish this independent oversight board, but they also passed laws to protect them from campaign financing issues. They're not even trying to hide their corruption. Now the organization is running by appointed members from the Democrats and Republicans. It is time to take our vote back for the people and away from the 2-parties by removing the ethical and unlawful violation. In 2010, the Supreme Court ruled that unlimited political contribution was a constitutional right, but this doesn't mean Wisconsin has to follow this. We can make more strict laws protecting the people.

The GAB can handle all the election issues that we have today. Look at all the lawsuits that are coming out that are only serving them as a political stunt during election year. Are some of these needed, I would say yes, but not all. If they wanted to fix this, they would fix it instead of making a lawsuit to fit their political agenda. There is an issue with this process, and they know it's broke. From my dealings with the current WEC, the employees that I converse with are amazing and care about the system. It's our leaders that convolute the system and hamper Forward progress.

## History

In 1974, an Ethics & Election Board was created for oversight into our elections. This removed the power from the Secretary of State who used to have the oversight. Fast forward to 1990 where they added lobbying oversight.

Things were starting to go awry, and the public started to see there were issues. In 1995, the Wisconsin Democracy Group, a watchdog group, started offering oversight. They immediately started finding issues, including finding some state commerce programs funds that were meant to help low-middle income were redirected to corporate welfare. The majority were from contributors of the election officials. This is considered a bribe in all other industries. One report showed an average 33,000% return on their investment from campaign contributions to corporate welfare.

In 2001, the "Legislative Caucus Scandal" erupted in our state. Caucus offices were being funded off taxpayer dollars to run their campaigns. Through investigations, nearly 50 federal felony charges were indicted, and all were convicted. You would think they would have learned their lesson...no. In 2002, Chuck Chvala, who was the Senate Democratic Leader, was charged for 19 felony accounts, including extortion. In 2003, the Election Board, through numerous complaints, fined 19 donors & a former governor \$7,800 for illegal contributions, that's a mere average of \$390 each. That's about what the costs of a speeding ticket over 10 mph is here in WI. Even in 2007, there was a Supreme Court judge fired for ethics violations.

The need for oversight was too much of pressure for our law makers, so they created the Government Accountability Board, and it was established in 2008.

## **Creation of the GAB and their findings**

The Government Accountability Board merged State Elections & Ethics Boards and was ran by 6-independent judges. They were all former state judges who were non-partisan and served 6-yr terms with 1 expiring every year. All staff was also non-partisan and comprised of 2 divisions – Elections Division & Ethics & Accountability Division. No members of the Democrats or Republicans were allowed to be part of this organizations. This offered independent oversight for elections, ethics, and campaign finance laws.

Of course, we wouldn't expect our law makers to follow the rules just because of new leadership. With the assistance of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, in 2010, there were \$23,000 issued for fines to 7 people for illegal contributions. In 2011, there were \$40,500 issued to 12 donors. The action persisted, yet the fines were increasing, and our representatives didn't like that. Democrats and Republicans, led my Scott Fitzgerald, started criticizing the GAB, especially during the 2011/2012 recall elections. The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign and the Common Cause tried defending the GAB. From 2008 to 2011, the GAB fined 110 people for campaign finance and ethics violations.

Of course, the John Doe cases against Scott Walker in the early decade that ended in 2015 may have had something to do with what happened next. The John Doe cases were simply Scott Walker campaign funds that were funneled through a corporation & it's employee to the Walker campaign. Individuals would take up to \$20,000 from their

employer, the maximum donation for a Governor Candidate, and donate it to his campaign. There was a total of 3 charges, and they all ended up getting grouped together. Michael Gableman, the same guy in charge of the election investigation right now, was the Justice who wrote the charges up in court. The report was so poorly worded and manipulated, that all charges were ultimately dropped. Of the 6 members on the GAB at the time of these charges, 4 of the judges had been appointed by Scott Walker.

At this point, all the leaders were tired of the oversight and people finding out what they were doing. They introduced and passed Act 118 and Assembly Bill 388 to abolish the GAB. They were even honest enough to add in some campaign financing protection laws to protect themselves from further investigation with financing. They absolved the board into the Wisconsin Election Commission and the Wisconsin Ethics Commission.

Kevin Kennedy, who was the Executive Director of the GAB, had been working on Wisconsin elections for 37 years said when it was abolished, **“The people in power did not like being held to account.”**

Since 2016, after the GAB, there have been a significant decrease of campaign finance violations. In 2016, Mayor Jim Schmitt was convicted for accepting funds from someone other than the reported donor and accepting funds over the allowable amount. He only received a \$4,000 fine and 40-hours of community service. He was allowed to stay in office until he lost the election in 2018. Scott Fitzgerald was charged with campaign finance fraud in 2020 from receiving excessive donations from 4 individuals and 3 PACs between 2015 and 2018. As of February 2021, he has not paid the minimal \$3,600 fine. Scott Fitzgerald was the biggest advocate for removing the GAB. A recent Alderwoman in Milwaukee, Chantia Lewis (Democrat), is now charged for filing false claims over \$21,000 of the campaign funds for her personal use. If convicted, I await the conviction penalty which history shows will be minimal.

My point to telling the latest charges, is that while these are atrocious, there are far less charges since the GAB as removed in 2016. We have lost oversight and watchdog groups need to return. There is no way that the 2 parties magically started doing the right thing. There is just no transparency anymore and I fully believe that the corruption is getting worse.

## Election Process Today – Campaign Financing

In 2016, the Wisconsin Election Commission and the Wisconsin Ethics Commission were created. In order to try to distance themselves from the public so it didn't look like they were involved, they set aside appointments that they would be able to select. Out of the 6 members that run the WEC's, they are appointed by the Senate minority/majority leaders, Assembly minority/majority leaders, and the Assembly Speakers. The appointees are chosen by our very own 2-parties to oversee their own elections.

As an independent candidate for Governor, I see that a Governor should be a servant and not a master. Yet the money coming into this position tells a different story. The Wisconsin Governor salary is roughly \$150,000, yet the 2018 election brought in roughly \$93 million between the 2 candidates. Scott Walker "raised" \$58 million with big sponsors from Las Vegas Sheldon Adelson, Amway Dick & Betsy DeVos, Ameritrade Joe Ricketts and \$8 million from the Koch Brothers. Tony Evers "raised" around \$35 million himself, also through some larger donors.

The 2014 election raised roughly \$80 million (Republicans totaled \$47 million and Democrats totaled \$33 million). Just in the 2012 recall election, \$82 million was spent (Republicans totaled \$60 million and Democrats totaled \$22 million). For more information on the horrible money in our politics, visit [FollowTheMoney.org](https://www.followthemoney.org) for all state data.

A rule that I have come across as an independent candidate, for all donations, even \$1, is that they want all information to include name, address, and occupation if it goes over \$100 and is capped at \$20,000 per donor. Why is it that they track all donations and addresses of those who donate on the lower donations and 3<sup>rd</sup> parties, yet their major donations are allowed to be anonymous? Common sense tells us that they are just collecting donors' information to target them and hide the big money. All information for donations is available online for anyone to view (<https://www.wisdc.org/follow-the-money/campaign-finance-database>). It can be searched by city, employer, or contributor. Since the current WEC oversight comes from Republicans and Democrats, they have direct access to this data.

We should have audits on all elected positions, especially for a Governor and the other 133 elected positions at the state level. We the people should know where donations to their campaigns are coming from so we can also compare that to their voting record to see if they are representing the people or their campaign contributors.

## **WEC Data Collection & Elections**

I was able to afford the 2018 WEC data, as an Independent I have to save money where I can, and I started analyzing the data before I could use it. My first step was to look at the phone numbers on the list so I could send out mass text messages. Out of the 2,202,996 phone numbers for all the registered voters, there were 417,270 duplicate numbers. There were 23,447 alone of the phone number 262-944-9050, and the majority of those were for Racine County; the same place that has lawsuits for voter fraud. There were 37,492 phone numbers listed for Illinois, 8,183 for Minnesota, 4,944 for Iowa, 8,180 for Michigan, and 66,488 for all the other states. This left 1,660,436 for Wisconsin phone numbers. Out of the phone number 262-944-9050, some of those registered voters have death records that date back to the year 2000. Most of the death records from others were around the year 2010. Some of the others from this phone number have birth dates from the 1940's or older. The data is not all correct or it has been manipulated.

Nobody is monitoring this data for oversight and the records purge is not matching those that haven't voted in years or the death records in our state.

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the WEC was able to remove 205,000 voters from the rolls. This was because these voters had not voted in 4 years and didn't respond to the mailers that were sent to them. By Wisconsin law, this should happen every 2 years, which is not happening. I am not advocating for removing voters from the rolls. I advocate for comparing our current rolls to death records, and to also update our database to be able to handle the updated information. Voters should be able to login to their account, with the proper security and 2-step verification, to verify their address, phone number, and see their voting record. They should also be able to register online. Until security in the system is established, nobody will be able to vote from this, but at least update and verify their information to register in their district. The system should also be able to run validation checks to see if multiple addresses or phone numbers are listed and work to fix them. If someone is registered and they haven't voted in 10 years, it shouldn't matter. As long as their information is correct, they are still a Wisconsin citizen, they should still be in the system. This database information can then be used at all voting booths to verify someone's information and register them as a voter. There should be nothing wrong with mail-in voting as long as the signature match is performed. We need to make it easier for people to vote if they are a citizen of this state and not harder. As long as they are a citizen, there should not be roadblocks for them to exercise our right to vote.

## **How We Need to Fix Our Process**

We must bring back the Government Accountability Board. Even today, Republicans & Democrats complain about the election. Recently Republicans and Sheriffs have filed lawsuits against the WEC for the election. I find it interesting that they only do this on election year. Our Republican leaders have no desire to fix this, if they would, then it would be done already since they control the House & Senate. The reality is that no party should be involved in our election process. It is an ethical violation at its finest.

When the GAB is resurrected, it should comprise of 3 organizations and operate independently of our government. The GAB should control all aspects of an election that should not have a political agenda tied to it, including oversight into our election, district boundaries for elected officials to avoid gerrymandering, and oversight and transparency into the campaign financing.

Here is a basic structure that the three board divisions should be comprised of.

### *1. Election Oversight*

- a. They should handle all the elections in this state. All county level and lower elections can still happen at the county, just report to the GAB for guidance and oversight. All State elections must be regulated by the GAB.

- b. No representatives affiliated with any political party will be allowed to work within this organization.
  - c. No outside organizations will be allowed to contribute to the Wisconsin election process, this is to include Facebook and other organizations.
  - d. All elections will have audits and violations will be criminally prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law
  - e. No political party will be allowed to "influence" the board or this would be a violation of the law and considered bribery.
  - f. Allow absentee voting to be counted before election day. We do not need any more elections dictated at midnight through thousands of last minute votes.
2. *Districting*
- a. They should handle all the districting maps, just like the Iowa model. Iowa does a fair districting based on the census and population. All data for the analyzation must come from the census data and have no 3<sup>rd</sup> party involvement.
  - b. Our maps in Wisconsin have been approved by the Federal Courts in 1981, 1991, & 2001. The Republicans were able to draw them in 2011 and that's why they're gerrymandered.
  - c. No tax dollars will be allowed for any lawyer fees or outside contractors.
  - d. Democrats and Republicans will not be allowed to contribute to the drawing of the districts.
3. *Campaign Financing*
- a. All candidates will need to declare all donations and where they came from. Instill transparency & oversight across all corners of our government.
  - b. No tax dollars can ever go for election campaigns.
  - c. If State or Federal money is given to any non-profit organization, then those organizations and members will not be allowed to donate to a candidate for political office. This is tax dollars being used for political campaigns.
  - d. Compare campaign financing to corporate welfare. We the People need to know who is financing our representatives and compare it to their voting history and corporate welfare.
  - e. All lobbying needs to register through the GAB with intentions and offers. No lobbyist can contact a representative without registering through the GAB. Any deviations from the action plan submitted to the GAB without amendments will be subject to fines and loss of lobbying license.

For all the reasons above that I laid out in our history of corruption, we must work to get money out of politics. The proper way that this should flow is through the people. If corporations treat the people correctly, the people will treat the corporations correctly. A corporation is not a person. I find it interesting that corporations scream for capitalism and a free market, yet they fund politicians and rely on taxpayer dollars to fund their operations and investments. If it was a true capitalist or free market, then they wouldn't need taxpayer money.

I believe in taxpayer dollars funding small businesses, some social programs, and any investments that can bring a return on investment to Wisconsin. Proper corporate welfare should have oversight and transparency that We the People can see.

## Summary

It's time to take back Wisconsin and establishing the Government Accountability Board again here in this state is crucial. The oversight of the GAB should again be handled under the authority of the Secretary of State. This is an elected position that will oversee the GAB and report back to our elected officials. The Secretary of State would only be allowed to advise the GAB and report to our representatives since this is an elected position that could be represented by a political party. We must make it fair and partial for everyone. If they are truly worried about getting elected, then put up the best candidate and work For the People.

If you're interested in current bills in our legislature being voted on for gerrymandering, watch SB389 & AB395. They won't pass because they might help and that's not what our representatives do for us, but there may be some news around it. I'm sorry, even bothering them with phone calls & emails is pointless. They don't listen and we need to change top leadership first before they get scared and we need to force them to start working For the People.

We need stricter laws for penalizing like the GAB was working for. An ultimate goal for the GAB would be to bring ranked choice voting to Wisconsin at all elected positions.

This is not WI. This is not together. This is not Forward. Money can buy a lot of things, but not trust. We do not have a free market; we have a politically manipulated market. Let's build a Wisconsin that we can trust.

**Websites For More Information**

<https://www.law.uci.edu/lawreview/vol3/no3/tokaji.pdf>

<https://www.wpr.org/gab-chair-blasts-conservatives-wisconsin-supreme-court>

<https://www.wpr.org/wisconsin-clerks-reported-238-possible-voter-fraud-cases-2016>

<https://www.opensecrets.org/news/reports/a-decade-under-citizens-united>

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2015/related/acts/118>