

# Documents show Gableman keeping tabs on public workers

Former justice speculates about their political beliefs

By Patrick Marley

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

**MADISON**

Assembly Republican attorney Michael Gableman is probing the backgrounds of public employees and contractors working on elections to determine their political leanings, including one who he believes is a Democrat because she lives with her boyfriend, loves snakes, plays video games and has a nose ring.

Gableman's tally of how he perceives others' political views was included in a tranche of documents he quietly posted online after getting sued under the

state's open records law.

Gableman, a former state Supreme Court justice, has been conducting a review of the 2020 election at taxpayer expense for Assembly Republicans since last summer. The latest disclosure about his work prompted one of his fellow Republicans to renew her call for him to shut down his review.

"I am so over Michael Gableman. He's not right," said state Sen. Kathy Bernier, a Lake Hallie Republican who leads the Senate Elections Committee.

"I can speculate as to why he didn't run for Supreme Court again (in 2018) and the speculation would be he's incompetent, in my opinion," she said. "You would never see that in a real investigator, that they go on to speculate on things. They deal with facts.

He is an absolute joke."

Gableman has used his \$676,000 budget to look into the backgrounds of those who worked with the Center for Tech and Civic Life and other non-profit groups, the records show. The center provided more than \$10 million to Wisconsin communities to help them run their elections during the coronavirus pandemic.

A memo from Gableman's office dubbed a mapping expert who works for Milwaukee as "liberally deplorable" even though she has exhibited "no overt signs of rampant partisanship" on Facebook or other websites.

The unsigned memo goes on to contend that geographic information system analyst Hannah Bubacz is "probably" a Democrat because she

plays video games, "has a weird nose ring," sometimes colors her hair, "loves nature and snakes" and lives with a boyfriend but is not married to him.

**'This is just insane'**

Claire Woodall-Vogg, the director of the Milwaukee Election Commission, said she never saw Bubacz act in a partisan way. She said she had virtually no role in the 2020 election.

"She is literally just an IT person," Woodall-Vogg said. "This is just insane. This is insane that this is what the taxpayers are paying for."

She called the memo's conclusions ridiculous.

"I love that people who play video games are liberal," she said. "I hadn't heard that one—or that nose rings were limited to Democrats. Or that loving nature and snakes (is).

I'm sure there are some Republican snake lovers out there."

Gableman has asked a judge to jail Bubacz, election clerks, mayors and others who he says have not agreed to sit for interviews with him behind closed doors. Attorneys for the officials have said any interviews should be conducted in public before the Assembly Elections Committee.

Gableman's memo also takes aim at Sara Linski, the information technology manager for the Wisconsin Elections Commission. The memo, which spells her last name wrong, calls her "liberally deplorable" because she worked as a field organizer for the Iowa Democratic Party for five months in 2014 while she was in college.

The memo from Gableman's office referred to

some contractors as "super spreaders" and called the top election officials in four of the state's largest cities "cross pollinators."

The memo did not define those terms.

Woodall-Vogg—who Gableman's team called "Voggy" in one document—is among those dubbed a "cross pollinator." Woodall-Vogg said she didn't know what Gableman was trying to allege but appeared to be making the election look like a criminal enterprise as part of "one grand conspiracy theory."

"I do have concerns that it's going to discourage people to work in public service and collaborating even this year when I rely on other departments for things like IT services, grant assistance, things like that across the city," she said.

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