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**Gableman defends elections probe in video**

*By WisPolitics.com*

The taxpayer-funded elections probe led by former conservative Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Michael Gableman has been under fire for weeks.

Now Gableman is defending the probe via video.

He says in the video released Sept. 20 that his investigation of the 2020 election for the state Assembly is not about challenging the results, which had Joe Biden beating Donald Trump.

He says it is about holding public officials accountable to the public for their actions. He adds the burden is on those who ran the election and the for-profit interests that did work for them to demonstrate it was conducted with “fairness, inclusivity and accountability.”

“The burden is not on the people to show in advance of an investigation that public officials and their contractors behaved dishonestly,” Gableman said.

The nearly 6-minute YouTube video was posted Monday after Gableman’s probe was criticized by a string of county clerks last week for his demand that they preserve materials from the 2020 election. Many clerks pointed out that they are already required to preserve certain records for 22 months after a federal election. They also raised concerns about the request, which was sent to them from a Gmail account with the username “john delta.” Several said the email raised security concerns and suggested they wouldn’t comply with the request.

Gableman has also faced criticism for traveling to Arizona to observe the much-maligned audit being conducted there and going to South Dakota for a symposium put on by MyPillow founder Mike Lindell, who has been accused of spreading conspiracy theories about the election.

In the video, Gableman says investigations must remain open to receiving information from “all sources, regardless of the personal biases of some sources.”

He also addressed those who have called for a forensic audit, saying there is no commonly accepted definition and pledging a “full investigation in order to get to the truth of what happened in our 2020 election.”

And he said election officials have a duty to answer the questions he poses and he will use the power of the special counsel’s office to compel testimony from those who don’t comply.

“I think it’s very important, it’s critical to know that an obstruction of this office is an obstruction of each citizen’s right to know whether all ballots were appropriately counted, that our elections were managed with fairness, inclusivity and accountability,” Gableman said.

A spokeswoman for Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, who hired Gableman, said the Rochester Republican’s office wasn’t involved in the production or posting of the video. The spokeswoman said Vos was pleased that Gableman posted the video to provide taxpayers with an update on the parameters of his review.

Senate Minority Leader Janet Bewley, D-Town of Mason, knocked Gableman’s claims that he won’t pre-judge any person or argument in the review, noting he has “already publicly accused the Wisconsin Elections Commission of stealing the election.” She said his “unnecessary” review “validates the harmful chaos that conspiracy theorists desire.”

“This is hypocrisy bordering on farce, except that the damage being done to our democracy is real,” Bewley said.

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