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**Gableman considering broader 2020 election investigation**

*By WisPolitics.com*

Former Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Mike Gableman said he’s considering adding a fourth prong to his 2020 election review after watching the Racine County Sheriff’s Office announce results of its own investigation.

During an Assembly Campaigns and Elections Committee public hearing on Nov. 10, Gableman said watching the event where Sgt. Michael Luell joined family members of alleged voting fraud victims in a local nursing home spurred him on. He said his team may widen the scope of its investigation to include long-term care facilities.

“It really moved me when I saw that press conference,” he said. “That really put a human face on it. That is when I resolved to myself: we will find out, we will find out.”

Gableman testified before the committee as he released an interim report on this work. He said his work has focused on three things so far:

* **The influence of outside money on Wisconsin elections.** Five of the cities targeted for subpoenas received the bulk of the private grants from a group largely funded by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg to help cover the costs of putting on an election during a pandemic.
* **Issues with the Wisconsin Elections Commission and the authority of clerks.** Gableman said part of that is a deeper look at who runs elections in Wisconsin.
* **Voting machines.** He said his review will look at aspects of voting machines that weren’t covered by the Legislative Audit Bureau in its report.

The hearing was at times contentious. At one point, Rep. Mark Spreitzer, D-Beloit, said the former justice is “frankly one of the people undermining voter confidence.”

Gableman called the charge ridiculous and “one of the most absurd things I’ve ever heard.”

In the 26-page report, Gableman says he already has evidence that private groups gave large grants to Wisconsin cities to “co-opt our election apparatus to their benefit.”

He wrote his office has drawn no conclusions after its initial information gathering.

Still, he also questioned the Legislative Audit Bureau’s description of how municipalities utilized outside help in administering last fall’s elections. Gableman’s interim report quotes from the audit released last month.

The LAB report noted one municipality indicated a consultant attended the August 2020 primary as an observer, helped to modify the community’s election training materials, and provided technical assistance for electronic voting equipment while at least five poll workers monitored the help at all times.

The nonpartisan agency noted a second municipality indicated a consultant provided logistical support and offered elections administration recommendations, but didn’t have the authority to make decisions and didn’t count ballots.

“This cursory reporting is concerning, because it substantially waters down already-public information relating to the involvement by a number of private groups in election administration, and it suggests problems were raised and adequately resolved by clerks and (the Wisconsin Elections Commission),” Gableman wrote.

Gableman later added his office has already uncovered evidence that raises questions if the involvement of private groups turned nonpartisan government agencies into get-out-the-vote operations.

The report touches on a series of issues that former President Trump and his allies raised as they unsuccessfully sought to overturn the election results after Joe Biden won Wisconsin by under 21,000 votes.

For example, Gableman says his office has evidence there were “numerous possible violations of state law” with Madison’s Democracy in the Park events in September and October 2020 as paid poll workers collected absentee ballots in city parks. Gableman wrote those possible violations call into question the validity of more than 17,000 absentee ballots.

Various courts rejected Trump’s efforts to have those votes thrown out.

In the report, Gableman disclosed he has issued 17 subpoenas. He also wrote his office has taken steps to “initiate an open and full technical audit of various voting systems to understand and report on the security of these systems.” The $676,000 taxpayer-funded budget that Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, approved for Gableman’s probe includes $325,000 for a data analysis contractor.

Gableman also wrote in the report that if his office obtains information that could be used in a criminal investigation, it will cooperate with law enforcement.

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