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WI City Looks To Tap Leftist Lawfare Attorneys Ahead Of Election

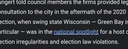

IMAGE CREDIT WLUK-TV FOX 11 / YOUTUBE

The leftist-led Wisconsin city at the epicenter of the 2020 "Zuckbucks" scandal is again looking to enlist the assistance of far left lawfare firms ahead of November's election.

A deeply divided Green Bay City Council last week voted 7-4 to retain the services of outside legal counsel to assist the city attorney in the expected litigation surrounding Green Bay's administration of the contentious election. There's good reason to expect litigation.

Wisconsin's Democratic-run government is just the home to a world-class NFL franchise and award-winning cheese, Green Bay has earned a dubious reputation as a hotbed of reputation thanks to highly partisan Democrat Mayor Eric Genrich, and his election law smashing city clerk, Kara Gewerts and she — accused of sleeze on their political enemies among other troubling allegations — appear to be doubling down on Green Bay's soiled elections reputation with the move to hire left-wing law firms.

"For me, it's all about perception. We do have a big election coming up with a lot weighing on the outcome," Aldermavan Jennifer Grant told The Federalist in an interview. "We have made headlines in the past, from going down to paper ballots, to not having a polling place (election officials) opening absentee ballots before the posted time. It's an issue, and it doesn't give residents confidence in this election."

City Attorney Joanne Bungert told council members she "strongly wanted to be prepared in seeking approval for outside law firms to assist her. She said she doesn't really need the council's permission. She noted how her office was overwhelmed in 2020 with lawsuits and challenges to Green Bay's suspect handling of the election as a central player in the "Zuckbucks" scandal.

"This is basically additional assistance for my office," she said at Tuesday's meeting.

But it's the legal company Bungert seeks to keep that has raised eyebrows from way council members. She is seeking to hire Law Forward, Elections United Democratic Center, and Stafford Rosenbaum, arguably three of the more left-leaning activist law firms in the country. Bungert told council members the firms provided legal consultations to the left-wing Democracy Docket in the 2020 election, when swing state Wisconsin — Green Bay in particular — was in the national spotlight for a host of election irregularities and election law violations.

Defenders of Democracy?

Law Forward "was founded in 2020 by lawyers who have worked for Democratic interests in Wisconsin for many years," chatty and activist tracker InfluenceWatch describes. The Madison-based firm "bills itself as a protector of democracy, committed to "fair, transparent, and representative government; where Wisconsinites participate in free, fair elections; and where voter rights counts" The leftist law group's record shows a commitment to Democratic Party causes, including its lead role in a phony lawsuit against Wisconsin's Democratic election President Donald Trump in 2020.

Law Forward was involved in the drive to intimate sentenced absentee ballot drop boxes around the state and a legislature mana-plan more favorable to Democrats — both achieved thanks to a Wisconsin Supreme Court that has been controlled by liberals for more than a year.

The activist law firm is the brainchild of attorneys Doug Poland and Jeff Mandell, partners at Stafford Rosenbaum, with a long history of representing liberal causes and candidates.

"Poland and Mandell stated that the purpose of the group was to push back against what they characterized as the use of Wisconsin as a 'testing ground' by right-of-center politicians and activists. The group explicitly stated that it desires to use litigation to advance 'progressive' policies and is especially focused on voting, electoral redistricting, and administrative law," InfluenceWatch reports.

If you're scoring along at home, Mandell, as InfluenceWatch notes, "was involved in the lawsuit to keep the Green Party and independent candidate Kanye West off the Wisconsin ballot during the 2020 election." So much for the defenders of democracy.

Democracy's 'Backup?'

The States United Democracy Center also launched in 2020 as the Voter Protection Program. It was "founded as one of many organizing coalitions and left-leaning strategy groups to coordinate left-leaning advocacy groups and Democratic campaigns in advance in the event that then-President Donald Trump lost and subsequently contested the results of the 2020 Presidential Election," according to its website. The "Democracy Center" is the creation of Norm Eisen, a left-leaning lawyer who served as the "Ethics Czar" in the Obama White House, the watchdog reports.

Insisting that it is democracy's "backup," the well-heeled center also billed itself as a "nonpartisan organization advancing free, fair, and secure elections."

As InfluenceWatch notes, the center is a smorgasbord of uniparty players, whose co-founder and board co-chair is New Jersey Conservative in Name Only and former Governor Christine Todd Whitman. Supporting cast members include Trump-hating former Republican National Committee Chair Michael Steele and Obama Administration Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano. It has supporters from Democrat Director Attorney Alvin Bragg's indictment of Trump in a bogus "hush money" case. Trump has appealed the widely criticized political conviction.

"Democrats wasted no time in hiring professional Left activists to 'spell Wisconsin from Democrats' after the event of a Trump victory this November. This is the power of the Left's political machine in action, and it's why conservatives must demand the Left's Big Commonwealth Lawfare Law Forward and its allies and replace them with a reputable, non-ideological law firm that won't warp the will of the people to suit Democrats' needs" said Hayden Ludwig, director of research for the Restoration of America PAC, a conservative committee that advocates for strong election integrity laws. Ludwig also is editor of Restoration Network, which last week reported on Green Bay City Council's vote to contract with outside legal firms.

The city attorney's insistence on using the groups is all the more troubling in light of Green Bay's checkered past on election administration.

"For me, it is same the same old same old," said Alderman Chris Wery, who has been fighting to expose the city's past an uphill battle— on election integrity in Green Bay for years. "We were hoping for more transparency and neutrality, but they doubled down."

Past is Prologue?

Green Bay's doubling down begins with leftist Mayor Eric Genrich, who was highly criticized for eliminating all but two polling locations during the first wave of the pandemic in Wisconsin's 2020 presidential election. The mayor's decision created long lines in which voters waited for hours in no small part because the partisan Democrat refused poll worker assistance from the National Guard.

But Genrich and his cabal were more than comfortable a short time later cozying up with the leftist Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL) and its network of liberal activists that infiltrated the city's election administration. CTCL, funded by left-wing former President Barack Obama among other top leftists, pocketed some $328 million in donations from Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla, under the cover of Covid. The brunt of the so-called safe elections grants went to the largest, Democrat-led cities, particularly in critical swing states like Wisconsin.

Green Bay raked in a reported $1.4 million in CTCL grants, which came with a long-time Democrat operative embedded in Green Bay's election office. As The Federalist has reported, Michael Spitzer-Rubenstein offered to cure (or amend) ballot envelopes in Wisconsin's largest, Democrat-controlled cities and was given the keys to the storage room that held Green Bay's absentee ballots on Election Day 2020.

Green Bay Clerk Christine Teske was so disturbed by the takeover of the city's elections by Democrat actors that she resigned in the weeks leading up to the election. She was replaced by Genrich's top aide, Celestine Jeffreys, who has had a difficult time following state election law.

"Earlier this year, Jeffreys was forced to concede that "she has not been strictly adhering to the statutory requirements" in Wisconsin election law aimed at detecting abuse of the Badger State's same-day registration process. The city clerk had to acknowledge that she didn't follow the law because she didn't understand the law.

In December, the Wisconsin Elections Commission found that the clerk violated election law in the 2022 spring election when she accepted multiple absentee ballots brought in on behalf of voters. Resident Matt Roeser alleged that he and two other witnesses saw the clerk "accept, many times, multiple absentee ballots from an individual voter" according to Green Bay's WBAY News.

'Road to the White House' Runs Through Green Bay

Green Bay's city attorney told council members that she would entertain using other outside firms, but said time is of the essence. Two of the leftist law firms have offered their services pro bono, Bungert told the council. Wery advised the city attorney to seek out a neutral law firm, or at least consider retaining a couple firms from different ideological perspectives.

"It's really sad," the alderman said. "You would hope that they would have learned their lesson, but it seems they're doubling down."

Ryan Hatch, of De Pere, located just south of Green Bay, likened the city bringing in left-wing lawfare practitioners to what Green Bay Knows best: football. He compared it to the referees of a Chicago Bears-Green Bay Packers rivalry game being on the Bears' payroll.

"I know we're talking about 'This is legal, it isn't political.' I don't buy it for a minute with all the stuff that happened in the last election," Hatch said. "The road to the White House goes through Wisconsin and Green Bay is a big part of that."

Matt Kittle is a senior elections correspondent for The Federalist. An award-winning investigative reporter and 30-year veteran of print, broadcast, and online journalism, Kittle previously served as the executive director of Empower Wisconsin.