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Get Big Money



Out of Politics!

October 2005

Edition No. 46

On the Web:
www.wisdcr.org



People's Legislature to rally at Capitol Oct. 27

It is time for the People's Legislature to meet the Lobbyists' Legislature. That is going to happen on **Thursday, October 27**, starting at 11 a.m. at the Capitol.

There will be a rally for reform on the steps of the west wing of the Capitol (State Street entrance) at noon, followed by a demonstration inside the building, and then participants will pay visits to the governor's office and their state legislators to blanket them with fliers calling for a special legislative session on reforms supported by the People's Legislature.

We hope you join us at the Capitol on October 27. Bring a broom to help us drive home our message that we need to sweep the people's house clean. And bring a friend, neighbor, co-worker, son, daughter, grandchild, sister, brother, mother, father or that friendly soul you run into in the checkout line at the grocery store. Spread the word in your community and help turn out others so we have a massive crowd there when the People's Legislature confronts the Lobbyists' Legislature.

One more thing.... Legislative leaders keep saying nobody cares about political corruption and government ethics and the need for campaign finance reform. When you join us at the Capitol on the 27th, slap on one of those "Hello, My Name Is..." stickers and write "NOBODY" on it so we can show them how many "nobodies" in Wisconsin care deeply about the failing health of our democracy and the shameful way business is conducted in the Capitol.

People's Legislature 'Capitol Sweep'

Rally and Demonstration at the Capitol

Thursday, October 27

11 a.m.

Bring:

- **A Broom to Sweep the People's House Clean**
- **Friends, Family and Co-workers**

See You There!

Fighting Bob Fest draws 5,300+

More than 5,300 people flocked to Baraboo on September 10 for the fourth annual Fighting Bob Fest at the Sauk County Fairgrounds. The annual progressive gathering is the largest political convention in Wisconsin.

The crowd this year surpassed last year's audience by about 1,000 people.

Democracy Campaign director Mike McCabe was among the featured speakers at this year's event, which celebrated Fighting Bob La Follette's 150th birthday and the 40th anniversary of the federal Voting Rights Act. It also served as a homecoming of the People's Legislature citizen assemblies held around the state and a launching pad for the next phase of the People's Legislature reform movement.

Other speakers included U.S. Senator Russ Feingold, Michigan congressman John Conyers and Texas populist Jim Hightower.

The need for top-to-bottom government reform was the theme that ran through the day's many great speeches and activities.

At a mid-day breakout session of the People's Legislature, participants added two new items to the movement's reform agenda: support for "instant runoff voting" allowing voters to rank candidates in order of preference on the ballot, and opposition to privatization of Wisconsin's voter registration system.

It also was decided to move beyond discussion of issues to action in support of the reform agenda. The People's Legislature issued a call to the governor and legislative leaders to hold a special legislative session to deal with political corruption in Wisconsin. Hundreds responded to the call to action by signing up to take part in the People's Legislature "Capitol Sweep" rally and demonstration at the Capitol that is now set for Thursday, October 27.

You can read Democracy Campaign director Mike McCabe's Fighting Bob Fest speech on WDC's website at www.wisdc.org/op091405.php. More information about Fighting Bob Fest also is available on the Internet at www.fightingbobfest.com.

Voter-registration mess deepens; state stands pat for now

The state Elections Board and the global outsourcing firm the agency hired to develop a computerized statewide voter registration list now both admit that the system being developed is so full of glitches that the state cannot possibly meet the January 1 deadline for completion of the federally mandated work.

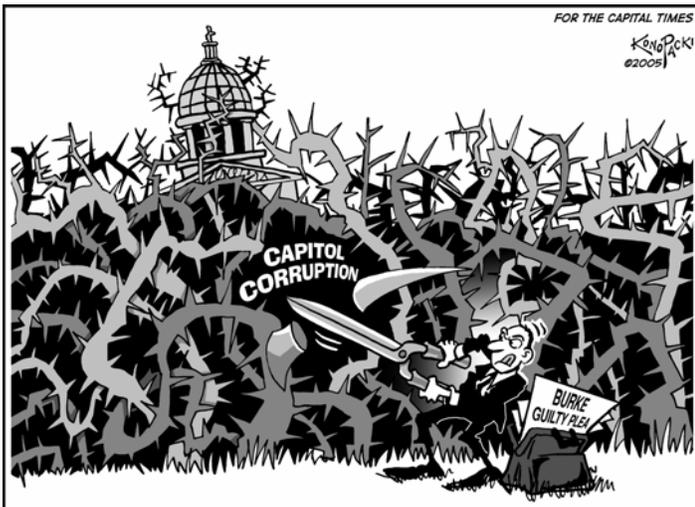
This latest bad news about Wisconsin's controversial \$14 million contract with Accenture was forced out in the open by an open records request filed by the Democracy Campaign. Following the revelation, WDC director Mike McCabe and State Representative Mark Pocan, a member of the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee, called on the Elections Board to declare a "material breach" in the contract because of repeated missed deadlines and numerous bugs in Accenture's computer program.

Using the contract's noncompliance provisions to declare Accenture in violation of the terms of the agreement would apply much-needed pressure by giving the company 60 days to remedy the problems or the state would be able to cancel the contract with no financial penalty.

McCabe and seven others filed a lawsuit last December seeking cancellation of the contract on the grounds that the Elections Board never voted to approve the deal before the board's director, Kevin Kennedy, signed it. The board also never voted to authorize a request for proposals soliciting bids for the project.

A circuit court judge ruled in June that Kennedy did not have the authority to unilaterally enter into the agreement with Accenture, but nevertheless upheld the contract on the grounds that the board retroactively ratified the contract – more than a month after the lawsuit challenging the deal was filed.

The lawsuit was successful in forcing the state and Accenture to make changes to the contract protecting voter privacy and enabling state officials to inspect the computer source code Accenture writes to program the computers used to register voters. Under the original contract, this computer code was treated as Accenture's private property and was not open to inspection by state officials.



Brian Burke: Convicted felon

Former Senator Brian Burke, once the powerful co-chairman of the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee and the odds-on favorite to be elected state attorney general, was convicted of crimes related to the Capitol corruption scandal earlier this month.

Burke pleaded guilty to felony misconduct in public office as well as a related misdemeanor. He will be sentenced in late November and appears headed to jail.

The Democracy Campaign first blew the whistle on Burke's political activities in February 2002, noting irregularities on his campaign finance report suggesting he was running his attorney general campaign out of his state office. The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported WDC's concerns and Burke came under investigation shortly thereafter. He quit the attorney general race in May of that same year and was criminally charged about a month later.

Burke is the second top Wisconsin politician convicted recently on corruption charges. Former Senator Gary George was convicted last year of fraud related to a kickback scheme and is serving a four-year prison term.

Also criminally charged in connection with the corruption scandal are former Assembly Speaker Scott Jensen, former Assembly Majority Leader Steve Foti, former Senate Majority Leader Chuck Chvala, former Assembly Assistant Majority Leader Bonnie Ladwig, as well as several aides. Jensen, Foti, Chvala and Ladwig still await trial.

Remember . . .

. . . the Democracy Campaign is turning 10 years old and we're throwing ourselves a birthday party on **Monday, November 21** from 4:30 to 7 p.m. at the Edgewater Hotel along the shores of Lake Mendota in Madison.

U.S. Senator Russ Feingold will be there to help us celebrate, and Wisconsin Public Television regular Peter Leidy will provide musical entertainment.

We will be presenting the Mr. Smith Award – or “Smitty” for short – named for the classic Jimmy Stewart movie *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*.

We hope you can join us on November 21 to celebrate what the Democracy Campaign has accomplished in the last 10 years and set the stage for our next decade of pushing democracy.



Community Shares is important new source of support for WDC

Community Shares of Wisconsin, the oldest social action fund in the country, raises funds for 60 member agencies – including the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, which became a member agency in 2004 – through workplace giving campaigns at private sector companies and public agencies.



If you work for an employer that operates a workplace giving campaign including Community Shares, you can help them help us by giving generously this fall. If you don't, ask your employer to consider becoming a Community Shares site. For more information on Community Shares, visit www.communityshares.com or call 608-256-1066.

Check out the Big Money Blog for the latest news and commentary about government corruption at www.wisdc.org/bigmoneyblog.html

An ode to serving time

The corruption at the Capitol is far from cleaned up. There's still a lot of work to do. Wisconsin Public Television's singing commentator, Peter Leidy, says singing while we work makes the time go faster. So here are the lyrics to Peter's latest, "I Copped a Plea," sung to the tune to Johnny Cash's "I Walked the Line."

*Well hello, my name is Brian Burke
I went from senator into other work
I am a lobbyist, so in the halls I lurk
And now you see, I copped a plea
Well you know I was charged with many crimes
Told my staff to campaign on state time
I needed donors, buddy, can you spare a dime?
A dime for me, I copped a plea
I pleaded guilty to just one felony*

*And to just one misdemeanor I'll agree
Looks like I'll get a taste of the D.O.C.
Correcting me, I copped a plea
I got greedy at the trough where I would gorge
And I have many more relationships to forge
Will they make me share a cell with Gary George?
C'est la vie, I copped a plea
I am thinking that if this had gone to trial
The prosecution would've beat me by a mile
So former colleagues, when your day comes to be
Do like me, and cop a plea
Do like me, and cop a plea*

Peter Leidy appears monthly on Wisconsin Public Television's "Here and Now" public affairs show. Other Leidy tunes can be found on our web site at www.wisdc.org/wdcsongs.php



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