

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

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Statement on Wisconsin Supreme Court Decision

MADISON, WI – Judge Gerald C. Nichol, chairperson of the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board, today issued this statement:

The Government Accountability Board was not a party to the cases decided today; however, the Court accepted an amicus brief filed by the Board. The Board is making this statement because it is charged with administering and enforcing Wisconsin's campaign finance law. The Government Accountability Board will review the court's decision to ensure that its administration and enforcement of the law are consistent with the decision as the agency moves forward.

Today's Wisconsin Supreme Court decision reverses a longstanding interpretation and application of campaign finance law that has been followed by the former State Elections Board and the Government Accountability Board since the U.S. Supreme Court's *Buckley v. Valeo* decision in 1976. It also reverses a 1999 Wisconsin Court of Appeals decision that backed the state's interpretation of the law, which the Board has relied on in its advisory and enforcement decisions.

In light of recent federal court decisions, in January of this year the G.A.B. unanimously passed a resolution requesting that the Legislature undertake a comprehensive review and revision of Wisconsin's campaign finance law. The Board also suggested that the best approach to this endeavor would be through the establishment of a Legislative Council study committee. Today's decision reinforces the need for that comprehensive review.

Now that this challenge to the law has been resolved, the Government Accountability Board is prepared to work with the Legislature to bring clarity to the campaign finance statutes consistent with the Court's decision.

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The Government Accountability Board (G.A.B.) is responsible for administration and enforcement of campaign finance, elections, ethics and lobbying laws in Wisconsin. The G.A.B. is made up of six non-partisan, former judges and is supported by an agency of non-partisan staff members.