

Wisconsin Elections Commission

State of Wisconsin

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Elections Commission Chair Responds to Federal Request for Wisconsin Voter Information

MADISON, WI – Mark Thomsen, chair of the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC), responded today to the request for Wisconsin’s voter list and other information about elections by the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity (PACEI).

“I am honored to report that Wisconsin state and local election officials along with many fellow citizens conducted a thorough statewide recount of the November 2016 Presidential Election in December 2016,” Thomsen said in the letter. “We are confident that the results are accurate and do not contain any statistically significant number of votes cast by persons who were not eligible to vote. We are proud of our open, honest and clean elections here in the Badger State.”

In the letter, Thomsen informed PACEI Vice-Chair Kris Kobach that Wisconsin will provide publicly-available data for the statutorily-required fee of \$12,500. At this time, the federal government has not paid the fee and no data will be provided until the fee has been paid.

Thomsen also cautioned Kobach, the Kansas Secretary of State, about potential uses of Wisconsin’s voter data.

“Because Wisconsin and many other states are unable to disclose non-public data necessary to accurately match voters within or across states, I can only point out that the data being collected by the PACEI cannot be used to effectively assess the accuracy of Wisconsin’s or our great country’s voter rolls,” Thomsen wrote.

Finally, Thomsen invited Kobach, other members of the federal commission and staff to attend the WEC’s next meeting on September 26 in Madison. At that meeting, WEC members will discuss responses to other questions about election integrity and administration posed by the PACEI.

Background

By law, most of the information in Wisconsin’s voter registration system is public and is available for purchase, and is commonly purchased by political parties, candidates, researchers and other organizations. A voter’s name, address and voting history are public, and this information has already been provided to campaigns and other requestors who have paid for it. Wisconsin does not collect any information about a voter’s political preference or gender.

Wisconsin statutes do not permit the state to release a voter's date of birth, driver license number or partial Social Security number. State statutes permit the WEC to share confidential information in limited circumstances with law enforcement agencies or agencies of other states. The Presidential Commission does not qualify under either of these categories.

The WEC does not have the discretion to deny a request for the public information in the voter registration database if the required fee is paid. By administrative rule, the price is \$12,500 for the entire statewide voter file, and Wisconsin law does not contain any provision for waiving the fee for voter data.

(Attached to this release are the two letters received from the PACEI and Chair Thomsen's response letter.)

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The Wisconsin Elections Commission is responsible for administration and enforcement of election laws in Wisconsin. The Commission is made up of six Commissioners – four appointed directly by the State Senate Majority Leader, Speaker of the Assembly and the Minority Leaders in the State Senate and Assembly. The remaining two Commissioners are by the Governor with confirmation by the State Senate from lists of former municipal and county clerks submitted by the legislative leadership in each party.