

State of Wisconsin\Government Accountability Board

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JUDGE TIMOTHY VOCKE
Chair

KEVIN J. KENNEDY
Director and General Counsel

MEMORANDUM – JUNE 2013

The Government Accountability Board will soon be contacting candidate committees that received individual contributions for more than the allowable limit for their office. Some background facts are listed below. If you receive a letter and have questions for our staff, please call 608-261-2028.

Contribution limits for state offices for each campaign period are set by Wisconsin Statute §11.26(1).

Limits by office:

- State Assembly \$500
- State Senate \$1,000
- District Attorney \$1,000 (Except Dane, Milwaukee, and Waukesha Counties, \$3,000)
- Lieutenant Governor \$10,000
- Governor \$10,000

Campaign periods are defined in Wis. Stats. §11.26(17).

- The campaign period for State Assembly candidates ran from 1/1/2011 to 12/31/2012.
- The campaign period for District Attorney Candidates and State Senate candidates with no recall election ran from 1/1/2009 to 12/31/2012.
- One campaign period for State Senate candidates with a recall election in July 2011 ran from 1/1/2009 to 8/31/2011. A second campaign period ran from 9/1/2011 to 12/31/2012.
- One campaign period for State Senate candidates with a recall election in August 2011 ran from 1/1/2009 to 9/30/2011. A second campaign period ran from 10/1/2011 to 12/31/2012.
- The campaign period for candidates for State Senate, Lieutenant Governor, and Governor with a recall election in June 2012 ran from 1/1/2011 to 7/31/2012. The next campaign period will run from 8/1/2012 to 12/31/2014, and will not be audited until 2015.

G.A.B. staff have endeavored to exclude contributions that are not subject to the limit. Committees with possible violations should verify that the contributions do not meet one of the exceptions below:

- Contributions for recall or recount purposes do not count towards the limit for each office.
- The overage was immediately refunded to the individual so that the committee never “accepted” those funds.
- The contribution was from a joint checking account and was incorrectly reported. See the Campaign Finance Manual, Reporting Receipts, page 12: *A contribution given from a joint checking account should be reported as a contribution from the individual that signed the check. If any part of the amount on the check is intended to be contributed by the other owner of the account, that amount must be clearly indicated on the check or in some other writing which accompanies the check. Note: If the amount is divided, each individual must be itemized separately.*
- Contributions may be from different individuals with the same name. Note that our audit compared both the contributor’s address and employer’s name and address, and identified some contributors as the same person even if the contributor’s address was different.
- Candidates that run for more than one office have a limit for each office. For example, two sitting Assemblymen running for the 33rd Senate special election had a \$500 limit for Assembly and a \$1000 limit for Senate, adding up to a \$1500 limit per individual.
- Candidates can give unlimited amounts to their own campaign. Note that these contributions should be logged in CFIS as from Contributor Type “Self”. Contributions listed with a Contributor Type of “Individual” may have been inadvertently included the audit.