

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

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Statement on Settlement of Litigation with Eric O’Keefe and Wisconsin Club for Growth

MADISON, WI – The Wisconsin Government Accountability Board is pleased to announce that Eric O’Keefe and the Wisconsin Club for Growth have agreed to dismiss their lawsuit challenging the Board’s involvement in the John Doe II investigation into possible campaign finance violations during the 2012 recall elections.

The parties have filed a settlement agreement today in Waukesha County Circuit Court ending this unnecessary and baseless lawsuit and saving taxpayers additional legal expenses. The agreement contains no admissions of wrongdoing or liability by the Board or its staff, nor will the Board pay any of the plaintiff’s legal costs.

The Board approved final language for the settlement agreement at its meeting Tuesday, December 15.

In the agreement, the Board simply pledged to continue to follow the statutes in the future regarding any investigations it may authorize, as the Board has done and intended to do without the litigation. Were this agreement in place prior to the Board’s involvement in the John Doe II investigation, it would not have changed any of the Board or staff’s actions during the course of its parallel, civil investigation. No substantive steps taken during the Board’s parallel investigation would have been prohibited by this agreement.

“The Board and our attorneys were confident we would prevail, and the judge would find that the Board was acting within its authority when it worked with prosecutors and conducted a parallel investigation,” said Kevin Kennedy, director and general counsel of the G.A.B. “This agreement vindicates the Board’s involvement in the investigation. More importantly, it ends this frivolous assault on the actions of the agency and stops the drain on taxpayer funds used to defend this action.”

During the litigation, the Board was represented by attorneys Paul Schwarzenbart and Thomas Brush of Stafford Rosenbaum, LLP, who were appointed by the governor’s office.

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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.