

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

212 E. Washington Ave., Third Floor • Madison, WI 53703 • gab@wi.gov • (608) 266-8005 • Help Desk (608) 261-2028 • <http://gab.wi.gov>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 9, 2014

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Reid Magney, 608-267-7887

G.A.B. Stops Enforcing Aggregate PAC Limits

MADISON, WI – On Friday, September 5, 2014, the Federal District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, in *CRG Network v. Barland et al.*, issued a preliminary injunction against enforcement of Wis. Stat. §11.26(9). This statute limits the amount of campaign contributions candidates may accept in aggregate from PACs, political parties and legislative campaign committees in a campaign period.

Although there is no final decision yet in the case, after conferring with the Wisconsin Department of Justice, the Government Accountability Board will not enforce these limits while this preliminary injunction is in place.

Candidates are still limited on how much money they may accept from a single PAC or other candidate committee in accordance with Wis. Stat. §11.26(2), and from a single individual in accordance with Wis. Stat. §11.26(1). Please see the table below.

This preliminary injunction allows a candidate to accept the maximum donation from an unlimited number of PACs. It also allows a candidate to accept unlimited donations from political party committees and legislative campaign committees. Previously, the only limit on how much a political party committee or legislative campaign committee could contribute to a candidate was the aggregate limit (65 percent of an amount specified in state statutes).

In April 2014, the United States Supreme Court decided *McCutcheon, et. al. vs. FEC*, which struck down the aggregate limit on the amount of money an individual could contribute to federal candidates. Following this decision, CRG Network filed suit arguing that the state's aggregate limits on PACs should be struck down as well. On Friday, September 5, 2014, Judge Rudolph Randa issued a preliminary injunction enjoining the G.A.B. from enforcing the state's aggregate limits on PACs, political parties and legislative campaign committees contained in Wis. Stat. § 11.26(9).

This is the second federal district court decision in the wake of *McCutcheon* to strike down a portion of Wisconsin campaign finance law. In May 2014, Judge Lynn Adelman issued a separate order in *Young v. Vocke* [permanently enjoining enforcement of the \\$10,000 aggregate limit](#) on campaign contributions by an individual within a calendar year contained in Wis. Stat. §11.26(4).

The net effect of these two decisions is that there are no longer any limits on the amount of money an individual may give to a Wisconsin PAC, political party or legislative campaign

committee. While the limits remain on how much a PAC may give to a candidate, there are no longer any limits on the amount of money that political parties and legislative campaign committees may give to candidates. All contributions are still required to be reported by both the committee receiving the donation and the committees making donations.

The table below summarizes the remaining limits for individuals and single committees.

Office	Individual Contribution Limit	Single PAC or Candidate Committee Contribution Limit	Party and Legislative Campaign Committees
Governor	\$10,000	\$43,128	Unlimited
Lt. Governor	10,000	12,939	Unlimited
Atty. General	10,000	21,560	Unlimited
State Treasurer	10,000	8,625	Unlimited
Secretary Of State	10,000	8,625	Unlimited
State Senate	1,000	1,000	Unlimited
State Assembly	500	500	Unlimited

The following limits apply to individuals and committees giving to non-candidate committees:

Receiving Committee Type	Individual Contribution Limit	Single PAC or Candidate Committee Contribution Limit		Party and Legislative Campaign Committees
PAC	Unlimited	Unlimited		Unlimited
Party	Unlimited	\$6,000	aggregate \$150,000 / biennium	Unlimited
Legislative Campaign Committee	Unlimited	\$6,000	aggregate \$150,000 / biennium	Unlimited

###

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.