



March 3, 2022

VIA EMAIL

Michael Gableman
Office of Special Counsel
200 South Executive Drive, Suite 101
Brookfield, WI 53005
coms@wispecialcounsel.org

Re: Public Records Law Request

Dear Office of Special Counsel and Michael Gableman

Pursuant to Wisconsin's public records law, Wis. Stat. §§ 19.31–19.39, American Oversight makes the following request for copies of records.

On May 26, 2021, Wisconsin State Assembly Speaker Robin Vos indicated that the legislature would hire three former law enforcement officers and a supervising attorney to investigate the November 2020 election.¹ Since the time of this announcement, Speaker Vos has expanded the scope of the investigation, appointing former Wisconsin Supreme Court justice Michael Gableman as “special counsel,” and gaining Assembly committee approval to form an Office of Special Counsel (OSC) and to spend at least \$676,000 in public funds, including budgeting for five investigators and \$325,000 for a data analysis contractor.² While presenting the interim findings of the investigation in a hearing of the Assembly Committee on Campaigns on March 1, 2022, Gableman recommended that the Legislature consider decertifying the November 2020 presidential election in Wisconsin and indicated that the Office of Special Counsel would continue operating in absence of a written contract extension.³

¹ Patrick Marley, *Top Wisconsin Republican Robin Vos Hires Former Cops to Investigate November Election*, Milwaukee J. Sentinel (updated May 26, 2021, 5:16 PM), <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/elections/2021/05/26/wisconsin-republican-robin-vos-hires-ex-cops-investigate-election/7455034002/>.

² Scott Bauer, *Wisconsin Election Probe Includes \$325,000 for Data Analysis*, Associated Press (Sept. 1, 2021), <https://apnews.com/article/technology-business-elections-wisconsin-election-2020-f0341f70bb123e809304771ed0c0b909>; Laurel White, *Republican Lawmakers Approve Former Conservative Justice as Head of 2020 Election Investigation*, Wis. Public Radio (Aug. 30, 2021), <https://www.wpr.org/republican-lawmakers-approve-former-conservative-justice-head-2020-election-investigation>

³ Henry Redman, *In Conspiracy-Laden ‘Circus’ Gableman Attacks Wisconsin Election Administration*, Wis. Examiner (Mar. 1, 2022, 5:35 PM), <https://wisconsinexaminer.com/2022/03/01/in-conspiracy-laden-circus-gableman-attacks-wisconsin-election-administration/>.



American Oversight seeks records with the potential to shed light on the Wisconsin Assembly's investigation of the November 2020 election, including regarding the role and activities of contractors who are performing work in furtherance of that investigation.

Requested Records

American Oversight requests that your office produce the following records "as soon as practicable and without delay":⁴

- A. All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, such as Slack, Google, Lync, Skype, or WhatsApp) between (i) Michael Gableman or anyone communicating on his or the OSC's behalf⁵ and (ii) any of the individuals or entities listed below, including, but not limited to at the suggested email addresses or domains. In the case of emails and texts, the search should include those sent or received from the specified officials' personal accounts and/or devices if they were used to conduct official business, as well those sent from their official email addresses or government-issued devices.

For Part A of this request, please provide all responsive records from January 18, 2022, through the date the search is conducted.

Specified Entities:

1. Anyone communicating from an email address ending in @legis.wisconsin.gov
2. Speaker of the Wisconsin Assembly Robin Vos, or anyone communicating on his behalf, including, but not limited to, his scheduler Alex Richter, his chief of Staff Jenny Toftness, his legal advisor Steve Fawcett, or his policy analyst Jake Wolf
3. Representative Janel Brandtjen (janel@brandtjen.com, janel@glmarketing.com, and rep.brandtjen@legis.wisconsin.gov), or her aides Bill Savage or Melodie Duesterbeck
4. Representative Joe Sanfelippo, or his aides Dominik Kolodziejczyk or Joshua Hoisington
5. Representative Timothy Ramthun (ramthun@hotmail.com and timothy.ramthun@legis.wi.gov), or his aide Tristan Johannes (tjohannesagency@gmail.com)

⁴ Wis. Stat. § 19.35(4)(a).

⁵ These individuals include, but are not limited to, the individuals identified in Michael Gableman's December 1, 2021, testimony before the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections. *See* Remarks of the Hon. Michael J. Gableman Before the Wis. Assembly Comm. on Elections & Campaigns, the Hon. Janelle Brandtjen, Chair (dated Dec. 1, 2021), <https://www.americanoversight.org/document/wisconsin-office-of-special-counsel-records-of-election-investigation>, PDF pgs. 27–34.

6. Wisconsin Elections Commissioner Bob Spindell (robert.spindell@wisconsin.gov, cd4.chairman@wisgop.info and rspindell@gottesmancompany.com)
7. US Senator Ron Johnson, his chief of staff Sean Riley, or his deputy chief of staff, Julie Leschke (including, but not limited to jleschke@protonmail.com), or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @ronjohnson.senate.gov
8. Former President Donald Trump, or anyone communicating on his behalf
9. Carol Matheis
10. Christina Bobb, Chanel Rion, or anyone communicating on behalf of One America News (@oann.com)
11. Daniel Eastman, or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @attorneyeastman.com
12. Douglas Frank (drdouglasgfrank@protonmail.com)
13. Erick Kaardal, Thomas Mohrman, or anyone communicating on behalf of Mohrman, Kaardal & Erickson, P.A. (@mklaw.com)
14. Gary Wait (glwfishes@aol.com)
15. Harry Wait (harrytrex@gmail.com or hotgovernment@gmail.com) or anyone communicating on behalf of Honest, Open, and Transparent Government
16. Ivan Raiklin (ivan.raiklin@gmail.com or socialmediaraiklin@gmail.com)
17. Jay Stone (jayjoelstone@gmail.com, jcarlson@stillwateroffice.net)
18. Jeff O'Donnell (theloneraccoon@protonmail.com)
19. Jim Troupis (jtroupis@hotmail.com, troupisjames@gmail.com), or anyone communicating on behalf of Troupis Law Office
20. John Eastman (jeastman@claremont.org), or anyone communicating on behalf of Constitutional Counsel Group (@ccg1776.com)
21. Jovan Hutton Pulitzer (jovanhuttonpulitzer@gmail.com)
22. Karen Mueller, or anyone communicating on behalf of the Amos Center for Justice and Liberty (@amoscenterforjustice.org)
23. Kevin Nicholson, or anyone communicating on behalf of No Better Friend Corp. (@nobetterfriendcorp.com)
24. Kurt Olsen (kurtols@protonmail.com)
25. Megan Frederick (homegrownintegrity@gmail.com)
26. Michael D. Dean (miked@michaelddeanllc.com)
27. Michael Flynn, Joseph Flynn, Charles Flynn, Michael Flynn Jr., or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @generalflynn.com, or anyone communicating on behalf of America's Future (@americasfuture.net)
28. Mike Lindell (mike@mypillow.com)
29. Nate Cain, or anyone communicating on behalf of Cain & Associates
30. Neil Saxton (neil.e.saxton@gmail.com)
31. Paul Farrow, Gerard Randall, Katie McCallum, Maripat Krueger, or anyone communicating on behalf of the Republican Party of Wisconsin (@wisgop.org or @wisgop.info)
32. Peter Bernegger (pmbmap123@gmail.com)

33. Phil Waldron (phil@onewarrior.com), or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @bonfiresearch.org
34. Ron Heuer (ronheuer@gmail.com, wiscjustice@outlook.com)
35. Russ Ramsland (yrku9sqs@protonmail.com), James Keet Lewis III (keet@jkeetlewis.com), or anyone communicating on behalf of Allied Security Operations Group (@alliedspecialops.us)
36. Phill Kline (phillklineva@gmail.com), Andrew Bath, or anyone communicating on behalf of the Thomas More Society (@thomasmoresociety.org) or the Amistad Project
37. Racine County Sheriff Christopher Schmaling, Chief Deputy John Hanrahan, or Sergeant Michael Luell
38. Shiva Ayyadurai (vashiva@vashiva.com), or anyone communicating on behalf of EchoMail (@echomail.com)
39. Sophia Tjotjos (stjotjos@outlook.com)
40. Thomas Ciesielka, or anyone communicating on behalf of TC Public Relations (@tcpr.net)
41. Thomas Obregon
42. Wisconsin Gubernatorial Candidate Rebecca Kleefisch

To be clear, Part A of this request seeks the records substantively described in American Oversight's request identified as WI-EXT-22-0056, directed to the Office of Special Counsel and Michael Gableman, from the period after that request was submitted—*i.e.*, from January 18, 2022, through the date of the search—with modifications to account for recent events (including newly identified information regarding particular entities and to eliminate certain communications counterparties specified in the previous request). *See* <https://www.americanoversight.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/WI-EXT-22-0056.pdf>.

- B. All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, such as Slack, GChat or Google Hangouts, Lync, Skype, or WhatsApp) between (i) Michael Gableman or anyone communicating on his or the OSC's behalf⁶ and (ii) any of the additional individuals or entities listed below, including, but not limited to at the suggested email addresses or domains. As in Part A, in the case of emails and texts, the search should include those sent or received from the specified officials' personal accounts and/or devices if they were used to conduct official business, as well those sent from their official email addresses or government-issued devices.

For Part B of this request, please provide all responsive records from June 1, 2021, through the date the search is conducted.

Additional Specified Entities:

⁶ As in Part A, these individuals include, but are not limited to, the individuals identified in Michael Gableman's December 1, 2021, testimony before the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections. *See, supra*, note 6.

1. Ashe Epp (asheinamerica@protonmail.com)
2. Boris Ephsteyn (bepshytn@gmail.com)
3. David Clements (dkc@theprofessorsrecord.com)
4. Draza Smith (ladydraza@gmail.com, ladydraza@yahoo.com)
5. Emily Newman (enewman@protonmail.com)
6. Holly Kasun (hollyataltitude@protonmail.com)
7. Jay Valentine (jay@contingencysales.com)
8. Jefferson Davis (davisforpresident@protonmail.com, jeffersondavis784@gmail.com)
9. Josh Barnett (trainwithkane@yahoo.com, contact@barnettforaz.com)
10. Katherine Friess (kfriess@protonmail.com)
11. Rob Natelson (rob.natelson1@gmail.com)
12. Steve Montenegro (steve@coronamconsulting.com, stevemontenegro@gmail.com, stevemontenegro@protonmail.com)

Please note that for both Parts A & B of this request, American Oversight does not seek, and that this request specifically excludes, the initial mailing of news clips or other mass-distribution emails. However, subsequent communications forwarding such emails are responsive to this request. In other words, for example, if Michael Gableman received a mass-distribution news clip email from the Wisconsin Republican Party, that initial email would not be responsive to this request. However, if he forwarded that email to another individual with his own commentary, that subsequent message would be responsive to this request and should be produced.

This request seeks records in addition to, and not duplicative of, records previously sought by American Oversight. In all cases, responsive records include records that were “produced or collected” under any contract entered by Speaker Vos and/or the Wisconsin Assembly.⁷

Fee Waiver Request

In accordance with Wis. Stat. § 19.35(3)(e), American Oversight respectfully requests that the records be produced without charge. Providing American Oversight with a waiver of fees is in the “public interest” because American Oversight will, in accordance with its organizational mission, make the records available to the public without charge. These disclosures will likely contribute to a better understanding of relevant government procedures by the general public.

American Oversight’s work is aimed solely at serving the public interest. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, American Oversight does not have a commercial purpose and the release of the information requested is not in American Oversight’s financial interest. Rather, American Oversight’s mission is to serve the public by promoting transparency in

⁷ Wis. Stat. Ann. § 19.36(3) (“Each authority shall make available for inspection and copying under s. 19.35(1) any record produced or collected under a contract entered into by the authority with a person other than an authority to the same extent as if the record were maintained by the authority.”).

government, educating the public about government activities, and ensuring the accountability of government officials. American Oversight uses the information gathered, and its analysis of it, to educate the public through reports, press releases, or other media.⁸ American Oversight also makes materials it gathers available on its public website⁹ and promotes their availability on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.¹⁰

The public has a significant interest in the Wisconsin Assembly's investigation of the November 2020 election.¹¹ Records with the potential to shed light on this matter would contribute significantly to public understanding of operations of the government, including the role of contractors in conducting the Assembly's investigation. American Oversight is committed to transparency and makes the responses agencies provide to public records requests publicly available, and the public's understanding of the government's activities would be enhanced through American Oversight's analysis and publication of these records.

American Oversight asks that if its request for a fee waiver is denied in whole or in part, that you contact us prior to incurring any costs.

Guidance Regarding the Search & Processing of Requested Records

American Oversight seeks all responsive records regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics. In conducting your search, please understand the term "record" in its broadest sense, to include any written, typed, recorded, graphic, printed, or audio material of any kind. We seek records of any kind, including electronic records, audiotapes, videotapes, and photographs, as well as letters, emails, facsimiles, telephone messages, voice mail messages and transcripts, notes, or minutes of any meetings, telephone conversations or discussions. Our request includes any attachments to these records. **No category of material should be omitted from search, collection, and production.**

Please search all locations and systems likely to have responsive records regarding official business. **You may not exclude searches of files or emails in the personal**

⁸ See generally *News*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/blog>; *State Investigations*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/states>; see, e.g., *State Government Contacts with Voting-Restriction Activists*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/investigation/state-government-contacts-with-voting-restriction-activists>; *Wisconsin Documents Offer Window into Early Uncertainty over COVID-19*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/wisconsin-documents-offer-window-into-early-uncertainty-over-covid-19>.

⁹ *Documents*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/documents>.

¹⁰ American Oversight currently has approximately 15,720 page likes on Facebook and 117,800 followers on Twitter. American Oversight, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/weareoversight/> (last visited Mar. 2, 2022) American Oversight (@weareoversight), Twitter, <https://twitter.com/weareoversight> (last visited Mar. 2, 2022).

¹¹ See *supra*, notes 1-3.

custody of your officials, such as personal email accounts. Emails conducting government business sent or received on the personal account of the authority's officer or employee constitutes a record for purposes of Wisconsin's public records laws.¹²

In the event some portions of the requested records are properly exempt from disclosure, please disclose any reasonably segregable non-exempt portions of the requested records.¹³ If it is your position that a document contains non-exempt segments, but that those non-exempt segments are so dispersed throughout the document as to make segregation impossible, please state what portion of the document is non-exempt, and how the material is dispersed throughout the document. If a request is denied in whole, please state specifically that it is not reasonable to segregate portions of the record for release.

Please take appropriate steps to ensure that records responsive to this request are not deleted by the agency before the completion of processing for this request. If records potentially responsive to this request are likely to be located on systems where they are subject to potential deletion, including on a scheduled basis, please take steps to prevent that deletion, including, as appropriate, by instituting a litigation hold on those records.

Conclusion

If you have any questions regarding how to construe this request for records or believe that further discussions regarding search and processing would facilitate a more efficient production of records of interest to American Oversight, please do not hesitate to contact American Oversight to discuss this request. American Oversight welcomes an opportunity to discuss its request with you before you undertake your search or incur search or duplication costs. By working together at the outset, American Oversight and your agency can decrease the likelihood of costly and time-consuming litigation in the future.

Where possible, please provide responsive material in an electronic format by email. Alternatively, please provide responsive material in native format or in PDF format on a USB drive. Please send any responsive material being sent by mail to American Oversight, 1030 15th Street NW, Suite B255, Washington, DC 20005. If it will accelerate release of responsive records to American Oversight, please also provide responsive material on a rolling basis.

We share a common mission to promote transparency in government. American Oversight looks forward to working with your agency on this request. If you do not understand any part of this request, please contact Sarah Colombo at records@americanoversight.org or (202) 869-5244. Also, if American Oversight's

¹² Wisc. Dep't of J., *Wisconsin Public Records Law Compliance Guide*, Oct. 2019, at 3, <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/office-open-government/Resources/PRL-GUIDE.pdf>.

¹³ Wis. Stat. § 19.36(6).

request for a fee waiver is not granted in full, please contact us immediately upon making such a determination.

Sincerely,

/s/ Sarah Colombo
Sarah Colombo
on behalf of
American Oversight