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Gableman's Shifting Answers Raise More Questions

*Claims Service on 'Statewide Commissions' Led to His Pick by McCallum;
Records Show Gableman Missed 5 of 7 Judicial Council Meetings*

Milwaukee – Responding to mounting press questions about how he merited selection as Burnett County circuit judge, Mike Gableman shifted to a totally new argument at a Friday public appearance.

Trying to explain to reporters how he was able to jump over two finalists for the Burnett County slot, Gableman said, “The governor indicated because of his familiarity with my work as a prosecutor, because of my service on statewide commissions, that he was familiar with my background, and he felt I was the best candidate for the position.” [Wispolitics.com event, 2/29/08]

Records show as an appointed member of the Judicial Council, Gableman missed five of the seven meetings held and was only a member of the Law Enforcement Standards Board four months before the judicial appointment. [[Judicial Council Minutes](#); [Law Enforcement Standards Appointment, 4/17/02](#)]

“If Gableman’s work on these two commissions was so critical to McCallum’s decision, it’s curious the former Governor never mentioned them in an interview last month or in the hasty defense recently issued by the Gableman campaign,” said Ross. “The fact is there remains no evidence Gableman completed an application, received any vetting or a background check, obtained any letters of recommendation, or had a formal interview.”

Numerous open records requests and searches of McCallum administration documents at the State Historical Society have produced no documents that address Gableman’s qualifications or fitness for the judgeship position. Instead, what was found were official records relating to Gableman’s fundraisers for McCallum and a private breakfast at the Governor’s Mansion with other top Ashland County Republican officials. Gableman also made two contributions totaling \$2,500 to McCallum during this period. [[Governor’s Residence Event Fax, 3/26/02](#)]

“If in the midst of a failing campaign, a billion dollar budget deficit and questions about his use of state airplanes McCallum had been informed of Gableman’s work on these commissions, he would have known that Gableman was largely AWOL,” said Ross. “The simplest explanation is the most convincing: McCallum knew Gableman because he was a big political donor and hosted two fundraisers for him during a high-pressured election year and one event just weeks before the selection to the circuit court.”

Gableman using his membership on statewide commissions as a qualification for the circuit court vacancy is nothing new. The August 19, 2002 press release announcing his appointment as Burnett County Judge stated that “Gableman is a member of the Wisconsin Judicial Council and the Law Enforcement Standards Board.” However, official minutes of the Judicial Council meetings reveal Gableman was removed from the commission after he suddenly resigned as Ashland District Attorney in May of 2002 and there is no evidence of

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his membership at the time of his judicial appointment as the release claims. [[Gableman Judgeship Announcement, 8/19/02](#)]

When running for judge in 2003, Gableman claimed in his campaign materials that he was a member of the Wisconsin Sentencing Commission and the Governor's Juvenile Crime Commission. Gableman had never attended a single meeting of either commission. His appointment to these commissions in the waning days of the McCallum administration was rescinded by the newly-elected Governor Jim Doyle before Gableman ever attended a single meeting of either commission. [[Gableman Burnett County Campaign Ad, 3/19/03](#)]

“Gableman uses his political connections to get appointments on statewide commissions and then tries to use his membership on these commissions to try to justify a promotion to even better jobs,” said Ross. “These efforts are hardly convincing as his membership on these commissions amount to hardly more than lines on a resume.”

Documents obtained by One Wisconsin Now included in this release are available at:
<http://www.onewisconsinnow.org/page/content/suspiciousappointment>.

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