



Milwaukee officials face Big Tech-related 2020 Election Bribery Lawsuit

Description

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~Thomas More Society**

By Madeleine Hubbard

Three Milwaukee, Wisconsin, officials face accusations of illegally taking “Zuck Bucks” to facilitate voting by purchasing absentee ballot drop boxes, among other things, according to a lawsuit filed by the [Thomas More Society](#).

The complaint, filed last week against Milwaukee Acting Mayor Cavalier Johnson, former Mayor Tom Barrett, and City Clerk Jim Owczarski, claims the officials violated Wisconsin’s election bribery law by taking private donations from the non-profit Center for Tech and Civic Life, which is funded by billionaire Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan.

“This is representative of a national trend,” Thomas More Society Special Counsel Erick Kaardal said in a press release. “Sixteen states have now passed legislation to ban or regulate the acceptance and use of private funds by public election officers. Thomas More Society attorneys, prior to the 2020 election, were the first to litigate this issue. Thomas More Society lawyers filed litigation in nine states. “All of this litigation led to successful legislative action to ban this ‘dark money.’”

Former President [Donald Trump](#) called Zuckerberg “a criminal” last year for reportedly spending hundreds of millions of dollars through the Center for Tech and Civic Life in the 2020 election.

The Thomas More Society has filed five lawsuits in Wisconsin. The Milwaukee follows cases in Racine, Green Bay, Kenosha and Madison, all of which asserted that officials violated election law by accepting money from the Zuckerberg-funded election group.

“We can’t undo the wrongs of the 2020 election,” Kaardal said. “But it is incumbent upon us to ensure that the corruption that infected Wisconsin’s voting process is rooted out and that the state’s election integrity is preserved.”

The 2020 election in Wisconsin has been controversial after Biden was certified the winner of the state’s 10 electoral votes. The state held a partial recount in November 2020 for that year’s presidential election in Dane and Milwaukee counties. The Wisconsin election [website](#) states that 2020 “Presidential results are still subject to change due to litigation.”

The 2020 Presidential Election results were certified by the Wisconsin governor on Nov. 30. The Wisconsin Elections Commission states that President Joe Biden beat former President Donald Trump at 49.45% to 48.83%, or by just over 20,000 votes.

“Wisconsin’s voters deserve to know the truth and they need to be assured that the corruption has been eliminated, allowing for fair and honest elections from this point forward,” Kaardal said.

It is illegal in Wisconsin for anyone to take money to encourage a voter to go to the poll, which is the main reason why the five towns were given money from the Zuckerberg-backed group, the Thomas More Society explained in the complaint.

“The evidence in this complaint is overwhelming and condemning,” Kaardal said. “Even on the surface, given all benefit of doubt, there is no question that Mayor Barrett, and Clerk Owczarski accepted private money from the Center for Tech and Civic Life to facilitate in-person and absentee voting in Milwaukee, as well as illegal ballot drop boxes. This is in violation of Wisconsin election law.”

He added that the Milwaukee elected officials “perverted the very process that put them in office” by inviting and welcoming “pay to play voter manipulation on the part of the Center for Tech and Civic Life and its partners.”

“That is intolerable and must never be allowed to occur again,” Kaardal said.

State officials, including many in Republican-run states, have not reported finding evidence of fraud in the 2020 election that could have altered the outcome. However, several states have acknowledged serious irregularities or unlawful changes to election rules occurred in 2020.

In Wisconsin, the state’s Supreme Court has ruled election regulators unlawfully allowed tens of thousands of absentee voters to skip voter ID checks by claiming they were “indefinitely confined” by the pandemic without suffering from a disability. Wisconsin’s legislative audit bureau found numerous other rule changes were made that were not approved by the state legislature.

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