

One Wisconsin Now: No politics at \$900 million right wing Bradley Foundation?

Posted on Thursday, May 18, 2017

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Contact: Mike Browne, Deputy Director
mike@OneWisconsinNow.org
[\(608\) 444-3483](tel:(608)444-3483)

Madison, Wisconsin — Internal documents leaked and reported on by the media have invited new scrutiny of the activities of the \$900 million Bradley Foundation. The Milwaukee based underwriter of hundreds of right wing noise machine groups was run by Michael Grebe until 2016, who concurrently served as the co-chair of Gov. Scott Walker's three gubernatorial campaigns and chair of his 71 day presidential run. Grebe was quoted in November 2011 saying he was "very careful" to separate his foundation job and politics but [an email obtained by One Wisconsin Now](#) raises questions about that allegation.

"It requires quite a suspension of disbelief that the then-head of one of the largest funders of the right wing noise machines in the nation — who also served as chair of political campaigns, who lobbied for Reince Priebus to be installed as head of the Republican National Committee and who Speaker Paul Ryan credited as his 'political godfather' — kept politics out of his day job," commented One Wisconsin Now Executive Director Scot Ross.

In a November 2011 [story on the Bradley Foundation](#), Grebe was quoted:

"I'm very careful here," Grebe said. "I don't use foundation resources for any of my outside activities. I have a separate email address that I use for politics. I do my political and civic work on my own time."

An email obtained in an open records request, dated May 2011, lists Grebe at his Bradley Foundation email address among a mix state employees and political operatives to discuss Walker's first 100 days in office. According to the meeting agenda, Grebe was among a group slated to provide the "Assessment of Governor's Performance on Message, Policy and Politics."

Besides Grebe, the email sent by Walker's 2010 gubernatorial campaign manager then serving as his chief of staff in the state funded Governor's office, went to key state employees working for Walker and longtime Walker campaign advisors Jim Villa and the notorious RJ Johnson.

Grebe left the Bradley Foundation in 2016, handing over the operations to the Rick Graber, who formerly headed the Republican Party of Wisconsin and served in the George W. Bush administration. One Wisconsin Now has been tracking, investigating and publicizing the activities of the Bradley Foundation since 2009 and maintains the website [Bradley Foundation Watch](#).

Ross concluded, "The Bradley Foundation under the control of Mr. Grebe spent hundreds of millions of dollars and new leaked documents show how every penny was scrutinized so it was spent to advance their right wing ideology. Are we really supposed to believe there's no politics going on there?"

#

One Wisconsin Now is a statewide communications network specializing in effective earned media and online organizing to advance progressive leadership and values.