

One Wisconsin Now: Right wing hits panic button as their spending on Michael Screnock skyrockets

Posted on Tuesday, Feb 13, 2018

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Republican Party of Wisconsin and Right-Wing Cabal At Nearly \$670,000 in Spending With a Week to Go Before Primary Election

MADISON, Wis. — State Republicans and their allies have pushed the panic button on the race for the state Supreme Court, already forking out nearly \$670,000 for the benefit of the campaign of Michael Screnock before the February 20 primary election. Spending by right wing special interests like the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce and the Republican Party of Wisconsin to elect high court judges is not new. But, One Wisconsin Now Research Director Joanna Beilman-Dulin noted, with such massive outlays already occurring, Screnock could be on the receiving end of record amounts of spending to try to boost his electoral prospects if he advances to the general election.

“The right wing cabal in Wisconsin has always opened their checkbooks to pack the state high court with their favored judges,” commented Beilman-Dulin. “But with a nearly \$670,000 down payment on Michael Screnock with a week still to go before the primary election, they seem poised to set records on this race.”

According to his most recent campaign finance report, Screnock has raked in \$110,958.58 in contributions from the Republican Party of Wisconsin, funding digital

ads, direct mail and staff for his campaign. The state GOP is far and away Screnock's largest contributor and has already spent more on him than their previous record amount of nearly \$70,000 to put homophobe Rebecca Bradley on the bench.

Beilman-Dulin noted the irony of the partisan spending directly on Screnock as he criticizes his opponents for expressing political beliefs.

A late contribution report filed this week also shows Screnock has received a \$10,000 check from the special interest Wisconsin Realtors Association. It was earlier reported that the state big business lobby the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce and the right-wing dark money outfit the Wisconsin Alliance for Reform have both placed ad buys promoting Screnock that total nearly \$550,000.

For his part, Screnock has indicated he'll be there for his generous special interest and partisan benefactors. At a recent forum he refused to support reforming court rules to require judges recuse themselves from cases involving parties that contributed large sums to their campaigns. The reform proposal Screnock rejects was suggested by over 50 retired judges and would reverse a 2010 rule literally written by the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce and the Wisconsin Realtors Association.

"Before becoming a candidate, Michael Screnock promoted Gov. Walker's and Republicans' right wing power grabs in court as a hired gun lawyer and got arrested for physically preventing women from accessing legal health care services. Now right wing funders are going all in to try to put him on the court and to keep defending their agenda," concluded Beilman-Dulin.