

One Wisconsin Now: Brian Hagedorn's past pays off ... with \$18,000 campaign contribution from big special interest

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MADISON, Wis. — Brian Hagedorn's work as a clerk for former Justice Michael Gableman looks like it's paying off for his own campaign for the state Supreme Court. According to a filing with the Elections Board, the special interest group the Wisconsin Realtors Association PAC larded Hagedorn's campaign with an \$18,000 contribution on January 25, 2019. In 2010 Hagedorn's former employer Justice Gableman was the deciding vote to adopt, verbatim, a rule change written by the Realtors Association to allow justices to hear cases involving large campaign contributors.

"Brian Hagedorn's boss was the deciding vote to adopt, word for word, a rule change on judicial recusal written by the same special interest group that just wrote his campaign an \$18,000 check," commented One Wisconsin Now Research Director Joanna Beilman-Dulin. "It sure looks like Brian Hagedorn is set to follow in the footsteps of his former boss."

Before moving to the office of then Gov. Scott Walker, Hagedorn was a clerk for state Supreme Court Justice Michael Gableman, one of the most controversial members of the high court in recent history. Gableman was elected after running a

false, racist ad that was the subject of Wisconsin Judicial Commission complaint.

On the court Gableman consistently sided with the special interests that funded his campaigns, including his casting of the deciding vote to adopt a change to state “recusal rules”, literally written by special interests, about when or if judges should not hear cases involving large campaign contributors or groups that spent money to boost their campaigns.

A subsequent effort launched by 54 retired judges from across the state and the political spectrum called on the Wisconsin Supreme Court to reconsider the rules on judicial recusal, including those changes written by the Wisconsin Realtors Association. The judges supporting reform noted how important it is for our courts to be free from corruption, or even the appearance of corruption.

They argued that setting objective rules on recusals in cases involving groups or people that spent significant sums to help elect judges sends an important message to Wisconsin regarding our justice system. Their efforts were rebuffed by the conservative court majority, including Gableman.