

State Treasurer Godlewski: Calls on Speaker Vos to close baseless election probe, disclose all financial records detailing how \$676,000 in taxpayer money has been spent

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MADISON, Wis. — State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski today issued the following letter to Speaker Robin Vos, calling for the baseless, partisan election inquiry led by former Justice Michael Gableman to be closed, and demanding the public disclosure of all financial records detailing how the wasteful probe has spent at least \$676,000 in public money:

Dear Speaker Vos,

The people of the State of Wisconsin are watching in dismay as the costly and dangerous partisan probe of the 2020 presidential election continues. This is despite a recent nonpartisan review that has confirmed the results of the free and fair 2020 presidential election in Wisconsin. It is clear this effort is wasting precious public funds as taxpayers have already paid at least \$676,000, and the unjustified spending is suspected to continue.

On October 22, 2021, the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau determined the 2020 presidential election in Wisconsin was safe, secure, and legitimate. This audit, as well as multiple court rulings, recounts, and independent, fact-based analysis of the 2020 election, have all reaffirmed the election results and found no evidence of electoral malfeasance. Wisconsin has seen countless close elections, and it is clear the 2020 election was no exception.

As the State Treasurer, I am deeply concerned by the reckless spending and lack of transparency and accountability with the election probe led by former Justice Gableman. Before the former Justice was appointed to lead this inquiry, he publicly declared – with no evidence or logic – that the 2020 vote had been stolen. Yet, despite this disqualifying predisposition, the Assembly leadership has given former Justice Gableman wide authority and extended deadlines throughout this process.

It was reported that former Justice Gableman's efforts were intended to conclude at the end of October, just a couple days from today. However, recent reports indicate that Republican Assembly leaders will now allow the inquiry to go through December, and even into 2022. The vagueness and elusiveness about the scope, timing, and spending of this effort is unacceptable. The Gableman Inquiry should cease all of its operations – including its funding – by October 31st, as originally planned. Further, the people of Wisconsin deserve a full, transparent accounting of how the public's money has been spent, and I request this financial report by year end.

Safeguarding the use of taxpayer dollars from this highly-questionable effort is a serious matter. But beyond this, my role is to ensure we do everything we can to have a strong, healthy economy. This entire effort has been erratic, confusing, and confidence-shaking as former Justice Gableman confessed he did not possess an "understanding of how elections work." These baseless claims are dangerous and create a false narrative in Wisconsin that is harmful to our economic security and long-term growth. The link between political stability and economic growth is well-documented, and studies have shown that stable democracies have stronger and more stable economic growth.

Wisconsin simply cannot allow this wasteful and dangerous inquiry to continue. I urge you to correct this situation by ending this effort by the date intended, October 31, 2021, and provide the people of Wisconsin with a full, audited report conducted by the Legislative Audit Bureau on the spending of this effort by year end.

Sincerely,

Sarah Godlewski

Wisconsin State Treasurer