

Jarchow campaign: ICYMI: Longtime friends of Eric Toney say 'Republican' AG candidate voted for Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden

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[Balsam Lake, Wis.] – A new [column](#) from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reveals that Eric Toney's longtime friends and campaign supporters say that he voted for Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden over Donald Trump – and even called himself a "Romney Republican." When confronted at an event about his voting, Toney was unable to answer and first wanted to talk with his political consultant. It took him three days to respond. Toney doesn't dispute the authenticity of the letter, nor correct their claims in his response to them.

In a series of letters and text messages between Toney and his friends, they continue that he even discussed removing Trump from office and was also critical of Senator Ron Johnson.

In response to the story, Adam Jarchow said: "If someone confronted me at an event and asked if I voted for President Trump, it wouldn't take me three days and a political consultant to answer because it's simple: I was a Trump delegate at the 2016 convention and proudly voted for him against Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden. As Attorney General, I'll take my track record as a conservative fighter who backs the badge, and enact reforms at the Department of Justice to make our communities safe and our elections secure."

You can read excerpts from the [article](#) below:

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Bice: A 2021 letter from past supporters claimed Republican AG candidate Eric Toney voted for Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden

Dan Bice

May 20, 2022

Just who did Fond du Lac County District Attorney Eric Toney vote for in the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections?

Of course, only one person knows. But here is some key evidence:

Last year, six of Toney's past supporters — most of whom are liberal — wrote him a lengthy letter expressing concern about the direction of his campaign for attorney general. He is running against former state Rep. Adam Jarchow in the GOP primary for the right to challenge Democratic Attorney General Josh Kaul this fall.

In the July 30, 2021, note, the authors, some of whom have known him 20 years, said they were upset that Toney was embracing former President Donald Trump and his right-wing, populist politics.

This was quite the switch, they maintained.

“After all, you have told us that you voted for (Joe) Biden and (Kamala) Harris against Trump in 2020, just as you say you voted for Hillary Clinton against Trump in 2016,” said the four-page missive obtained by the Journal Sentinel. Two sources confirmed the authenticity of the letter, which Toney does not dispute.

Wait a second. Toney, a longtime Republican, voted for the Democratic nominee for president in the last two elections?

If this was false, it's something you would expect him to refute in his response.

But he did not.

In an email five hours later, Toney told the group that his politics probably were not like any of theirs. But he thanked them for the note, saying he did “appreciate seeing some of that (feedback) in writing.”

He explained that he had deleted a pro-Trump post on his Facebook page after they called it into question. He also made clear that he was not part of the extremist

anti-vaccine or “stop the steal” crowds.

“I wish you could be at events when I speak, and I tell people I don’t believe the election was stolen, that I don’t see an audit as being helpful, and that I’m vaccinated,” Toney wrote.

Not a word about their claim that he had told them he voted for Clinton in 2016 and Biden four years later in his 1,000-word response.

Earlier this year, the Journal Sentinel tracked down Toney at a Republican congressional district caucus in West Bend and put the question to him about his voting record in the past two presidential contests.

The third-term prosecutor didn’t answer immediately, saying he wanted to talk first to a campaign consultant. Three days later, on Feb. 16, he emailed this statement:

“I voted for Trump in 2016 and 2020, and I organized law enforcement to attend a Trump rally with me. Like others, I’ve lost friends because of my support for President Trump and our cops.”

He also emailed a four-page document showing his support for Republicans reaching back to former U.S. President George W. Bush.

And what is Toney saying now?

On Thursday, Toney said the letter came from “former friends,” most of whom he’s known since high school and now support Democrats. He said his email response was an attempt to salvage those friendships.

“Someone released (the exchange) and is trying to take advantage of it for political gain,” Toney said. “It’s disgusting but not surprising.”

Toney said the former friends are upset with him for voting for Trump, standing with law enforcement and failing to enforce Democratic Gov. Tony Evers’ mask mandate.

His statement did not say whether he ever told those onetime allies if he voted for Clinton and Biden.

The Journal Sentinel reviewed a series of January text messages between Toney and some of the authors of the July letter that appeared to demonstrate the fraying

relationship between the two sides. Both sides argued vociferously about the mask mandate.

In response, Jarchow — Toney’s opponent — took a swipe at the Fond du Lac County prosecutor for his handling of the entire matter.

“If someone confronted me at an event and asked if I voted for President Trump, it wouldn’t take me three days and a political consultant to answer because it’s simple,” Jarchow said. “I was a Trump delegate at the 2016 convention and proudly voted for him against Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden.

As for the two sources who confirmed the authenticity of the letter to Toney, they said they have known him for at least 10 years. Both lean Democratic, though they supported Toney’s initial campaign for Fond du Lac County district attorney in 2012.

Both sources said they have heard Toney be extremely critical of Trump in private conversations in which he stated definitively that he voted for Clinton and Biden.

“He was never shy about his criticism of Trump. He called himself a Romney Republican during the first impeachment,” the first source said. “We talked about how Trump should be impeached or how he should be removed via the 25th Amendment.”

The source said Toney would acknowledge that Trump lost and that he wanted to save the Republican Party from “those people.” Toney was also highly critical of such other top GOP officials as U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson in those conversations, the source said.

The second source described Toney as a “reasonable, reality-based Republican” before his run for attorney general.

In their July 2021 letter, the six authors of the letter played up their long ties to him.

“Many of us have known you for more than twenty years. We all supported your improbable campaign for Fond du Lac County District Attorney in 2012,” the letter said. “We have been watching your campaign for Wisconsin Attorney General, and we do not recognize the candidate.”

The authors pointed to an April 2021 Facebook post in which Toney recalled

attending a 2020 rally for Trump, who he said was a “staunch supporter of law enforcement.”

They suggested Trump’s statements at the rally seemed out of step with Toney’s. In particular, they noted that Trump accused Biden and Harris of being “pro-crime and anti-cop.”

While campaigning for attorney general, they said, Toney was hearing a lot from Republicans who thought the 2020 election was “stolen” from Trump and that the COVID-19 pandemic is a “hoax.”

“You repeatedly said you expected to be able to ‘thread the needle,’” the authors wrote. They added, “How far are you willing to go to attempt to convince the Republican primary electorate you are sufficiently Trumpy?”

The letter ends by saying the authors did not enjoy writing it. Rather, they said, they felt depressed, infuriated and exhausted. But they said they wouldn’t take the easy way out and sit back and remain silent.

Toney responded by saying he doesn’t tell people things just because that’s what they want to hear.

He pointed to his decision to file 10 criminal complaints related to COVID-19 in 2020. All of the cases, which were later dropped, had to do with violations of Evers’ safer-at-home order that clamped down on schools and closed non-essential businesses due to the coronavirus pandemic.

“I have Republicans that hate me because I filed covid cases, because it was the law,” Toney wrote. “I dismissed them once it wasn’t the law.”

But Toney said he was standing up for police officers with his campaign, noting that his father was in law enforcement. He said he wanted to defeat Kaul because of what he said was his failure to lead on any number of issues.

“You will not see eye to eye with me on everything, just like I don’t with all of you, but I still choose to be your friends,” Toney concluded. “Hopefully you’ll all still choose to be my friend. It’s hard without all of you. I’m not perfect, and my friends help remind me when I’m not.”