

# Madison Mayor Rhodes-Conway: Statement on the Gableman report and judge ruling on open records access

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Dane County Circuit Court Judge Frank Remington ruled that Assembly Speaker Vos and Michael Gableman “arbitrarily and capriciously” denied access to public records related to their review of the 2020 elections. He added, “This is the sort of ‘unconsidered and irrational’ conduct deserving of punitive damages.”

Compare that to the City of Madison, which has fulfilled more than 45 requests for records from the 2020 elections, totaling over 16,000 pages in length. Every one of these has pointed to the same conclusion: Madison ran a fair and legal election.

Gableman seems to be obsessed with a grant used by the City of Madison to help conduct elections during a global pandemic, and defies reality by claiming there was no need for additional election funding. Even more disturbing is his claim that local clerks violated the law by simply providing information and tools to voters so that they could navigate the absentee voting process. In what other area of government do we ask public servants to be unhelpful to their customers and the public? This is just another illustration of Gableman’s admitted ignorance of Wisconsin’s election system. With this court judgement and the findings of Gableman’s final report, the public must wonder: Who is hiding something and why?

All reasonable people can now see this is a thinly veiled effort to undercut the public’s confidence in our state electoral system. As Judge Remington noted, the records reviewed by the court indicate this is not an investigation at all. In addition,

the order finds that Gableman failed to demonstrate the existence of a contract, or any other grant of power to continue acting as Special Counsel. Speaker Vos and Michael Gableman are wasting state and local taxpayer dollars to fuel conspiracy theories in a desperate, unfounded hope to overturn the November 2020 election and sow baseless seeds of doubt in future elections. It is time to shut down this national embarrassment and waste of taxpayer dollars. We do not need to put up with a private citizen using public funds to simply enrich himself and continue to try to prop up the Big Lie.

For all of their bluster and allegations of wrongdoing by Wisconsin's public servants and voters, Gableman and Vos are the only actors in this saga who have been found in violation of Wisconsin law and fined by a court. That is ironic, but also fitting. Unfortunately, Wisconsin taxpayers are now on the hook for their illegal behavior. At the very least, the fines and attorney fees imposed by the court should come out of Gableman's budget. That would be the most legitimate use of his budget so far.