

Thomas More Society: Wisconsin Supreme Court decision banning absentee ballot drop boxes is “tip of the iceberg”

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(July 8, 2022 – Madison, Wisconsin) The Wisconsin Supreme Court 4-3 decision in *Teigen v. Wisconsin Elections Commission*, has determined that unmanned absentee ballot drop boxes are illegal under Wisconsin election law. The decision handed down on July 8, 2022, in a lawsuit brought by voters, brings resolution to a key issue in the accusations of election bribery that originally arose in the state’s November 2020 general election. Thomas More Society attorneys will now be able to deliver wins to voters who have filed lawsuits about the drop boxes in the Circuit Courts of five counties, and who have accused the Wisconsin Election Commission Administrator Meagan Wolfe of violating her duties under Wisconsin election law.

“This decision reveals just the tip of iceberg of Wisconsin’s election integrity problems,” Thomas More Society Special Counsel Erick Kaardal stated in response the state’s high court ruling. He went on to explain how an agreement existed between the Center for Tech and Civic Life and Wisconsin’s five largest cities to violate the state law banning absentee ballot drop boxes in the 2020 election.

“And the worst of it,” Kaardal added, “Is that it was all coordinated with the blessing of the Wisconsin Elections Commission.”

With support from the Wisconsin Supreme Court decision, Thomas More Society attorneys charge that an illegal agreement existed between the Center for Tech and Civic Life and Wisconsin’s five largest cities to pay for and use the legally unauthorized absentee ballot drop boxes in the November 2020 election.

Additionally, the Wisconsin Elections Commission's illegal guidance on the use of unmanned absentee ballot drop boxes, in March and August 2020, was also found to be legally unauthorized by this Wisconsin Supreme Court decision, as it was simultaneous with the illegal agreement between the Center for Tech and Civic Life and the cities identified as the "Wisconsin 5" - Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay, Racine, and Kenosha.

The Center for Tech and Civic Life is a non-profit Chicago-based organization, led and staffed by former Democratic activists and funded by billionaire Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan, to influence the 2020 election. This partisan, special interest group poured more than \$300 million into gaining access to election administration processes during the 2020 Presidential election.

Kaardal summarized, "Obviously, the Center for Tech and Civic Life, the Wisconsin Elections Commission, and the Wisconsin 5 mayors were in cahoots to purchase and use the illegal drop boxes in the November 2020 election. Now, all the Wisconsin state courts need to do to clean up Wisconsin elections is to follow the money associated with the privately financed legally unauthorized drop boxes."

Under the Center for Tech and Civic Life's "Wisconsin Safe Voting Plan" dated June 15, 2020, the Zuckerberg funded organization transferred \$216,500 for absentee ballot drop boxes to be used in the five cities. The agreement signed by the center and the mayors of Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay, Racine, and Kenosha, clearly states the intentions to purchase the legally unauthorized unmanned drop boxes.

The Wisconsin Election Commission's illegal advice to the municipal clerks in the Wisconsin 5 cities instructed them to use legally unauthorized unmanned absentee ballot drop boxes and was dated for March 31 and August 19, 2020 - simultaneous with the June 15, 2020, "Wisconsin Safe Voting Plan." The Wisconsin Election Commission's failure to cite specific legal authority in its two advisory opinions was a violation of its statutory duties.

"The fact that the legally unauthorized advisory opinions were issued simultaneously with the Center for Tech and Civic Life's agreement with the Wisconsin 5 cities' mayors to purchase and use unmanned absentee ballot drop boxes is strong evidence of legally unauthorized coordination to violate Wisconsin's election laws," Kaardal noted. "And the Wisconsin Elections Commission could not actually have cited any legal authority to use those unmanned absentee ballot drop boxes because Wisconsin's statutes read the opposite - that such boxes are 'legally

unauthorized,' a situation which has since been validated and reinforced by the Wisconsin Supreme Court decision in *Teigen v. Wisconsin Election Commission*."

The \$216,500 agreed upon to pay for absentee ballot drop boxes is just one line item in the total funding of \$6,324,567 promised to these cities by the Center for Tech and Civic Life for abiding by the illegal plan to focus on delivering votes from certain targeted demographic groups.

Kaardal described the Wisconsin Supreme Court decision as yet another building block in revealing a massive scheme on the part of the Center for Tech and Civic Life to usurp the administration of the election, a core traditional governmental function. Under the guise of COVID-19 prevention and via the illegal dumping of private money into the municipal process, the Center for Tech and Civic Life handed control of the 2020 election in Wisconsin over to private partisan interests, in the form of its "partners."

"Yes, the 2020 election is over and done with," Kaardal observed, "But it is incumbent upon us to ensure that the corruption that infected Wisconsin's voting process in November 2020 is rooted out and that the state's election integrity is preserved. It is especially important that the Wisconsin Election Commission, the entity charged with safeguarding the state's election integrity, be above reproach. Wisconsin's voters deserve to know the truth and they need to be assured that the corruption has been eliminated, allowing for fair and honest elections from this point forward."

Thomas More Society attorneys, prior to the 2020 election, were the first to litigate the private-money-paying-for-election-illegalities issue and have since filed litigation in nine states. This litigation has led to successful legislative action to ban this "dark money."

"Twenty states have now passed legislation to ban or regulate the acceptance and use of private funds by public election officials," Kaardal pointed out. "It's the election equivalent of pay-to-play and Wisconsin law should join this movement and deem privately funded election illegalities as election bribery." The Wisconsin legislature passed a ban on private money funding of election administration, but it was vetoed by Gov. Tony Evers.