



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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OWN Files Ethics Complaint Against WMC Over Failure to Disclose Lobbying Activity

Buchen: 'WMC Actively Lobbied for Final Passage of UW Budget'

Milwaukee – One Wisconsin Now has filed a complaint with the state's Government Accountability Board (GAB) against Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce and its seven-member lobbying team for failure to report lobbying activities.

An August 20, 2008 memorandum authored by WMC Vice President for Government Relations Jim Buchen claims "WMC actively lobbied for final passage of the UW budget," yet no lobbying activity was reported by WMC to the GAB for the University of Wisconsin budget, as required under the law.

"When out-going UW Chancellor John Wiley criticized the 'toxic' political atmosphere in state government created by WMC, big business's mouthpiece went on the attack," said Scot Ross, One Wisconsin Now Executive Director. "WMC will have to come clean – did they fail to follow the law, or did they do nothing to help the UW?"

Wisconsin Statute 13.64(1) requires a lobbying principal who makes expenditures or incurs obligations file with the GAB a statement including "the general areas of legislative...action which the principal is attempting to influence...and interest of the principal." WMC's own website does not indicate it lobbies on higher education or funding for the UW.

The Buchen memo states WMC attempted to influence legislation on the UW budget, but it does not list the UW as a budget bill subject in which it lobbied in 2007-2008. In addition, under the GAB listing for lobbying activities for the UW budget, WMC is not listed as having registered any lobbying.

"WMC can't operate as though it's above the law," said Ross. "WMC has enormous sway with conservatives in the state legislature, but it can't ignore the same laws which any lobbying group must follow."

WMC 2007-2008 Lobbying Effort, Reported to the GAB
<http://ethics.state.wi.us/scripts/2007Session/BandRLobbied.asp?PrinID=2750>

(more)

OWN Release – Page 2

Organizations Which Reported Lobbying on the UW System as a Budget Bill Subject
2007-2008

<http://ethics.state.wi.us/scripts/2007Session/budgetbillssubjects.asp?budgetbillssubjectnumber=106>

Penalties for violations of the law outlined in the OWN complaint to the GAB include monetary fines, as well as lobbyist license suspension. Violation of 13.69(6m), intentionally filing a false lobbying statement, is a Class H felony.

One Wisconsin Now is a progressive advocacy organization specializing in rapid response, earned media and online organizing. One Wisconsin Now's affiliated research and education organization, the Institute for One Wisconsin, hosts WMCWatch.org, a online warehouse of research information about WMC, its agenda, board members, spending and contributions.

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One Wisconsin Now is a statewide communications network specializing in effective earned media and online organizing to advance progressive leadership and values.