

*****Press Release*****

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Ziegler Benefits from Bank Board Contributions, Bank Benefits from Ziegler Rulings 97% Of the Time

Will candidate return bank board contributions?



OWN Your Voice
OWN Our Future

Milwaukee— Annette Ziegler has taken political contributions from current West Bend Savings Bank Board of Directors while at the same time ruling in favor of the bank 97% of the time with well over \$100,000 in cash settlements, home foreclosures and seized vehicles.

On Monday, the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign asked the Wisconsin Supreme Court's Judicial Commission to investigate whether Ziegler violated the Judicial Code of Conduct by ruling on cases involving West Bend Savings Bank while failing to disclose her conflicts of interest with the bank.

Ziegler's husband J.J. is a paid director of the bank and claims income from the bank for renting it office space. In addition, state and Washington County Register of Deed records show that Ziegler has received \$3.1 million in loans from West Bend Savings Bank, including a \$2 million loan during her campaign for our highest court.

According to Ziegler's campaign finance records and the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign (WDC) campaign contribution database, Ziegler has taken 6 contributions from 4 different West Bend Savings Bank Board of Directors.

On May 22, 2006 Ziegler decided two cases in favor of West Bend Savings Bank then on June 10, 2006 she received contributions from two bank board members- William Gehl, (\$500) and James Spella, (\$100).

In addition, on June 15, 2006, bank board member A.J. Gumm contributed \$250 to Ziegler. On June 19, 2006 Ziegler decided a case in favor of West Bend Savings Bank and on June 26, 2006, Gehl contributed another \$150 to Ziegler. On December 29, 2006 Richard Larson contributed \$500 and Gumm contributed another \$100 to Ziegler's campaign.

(More)

Ziegler has ruled in favor of West Bend Savings Bank in 43 out of 44 cases (97.7%) either by awarding them a financial judgment or agreeing to their motion to dismiss a case. In 40 out of 41 cases (97.6%) where there was a monetary judgment, she sided with West Bend Savings bank.

A Wisconsin State Journal report revealed that in 46 cases involving West Bend Savings Bank where Ziegler was the sitting judge, there are "no indications that Ziegler withdrew from West Bend Savings cases, and no notices to the parties of any conflict."

The WDC request for an ethics investigation also cites other cases handled by Ziegler, involving banks and other businesses in which she owned \$50,000 worth of stock or more.

According to the Wisconsin State Journal, "Ziegler has presided over 22 cases involving companies in which she owned stock worth more than \$50,000."

The newspaper reported that, "The files give no indication that Ziegler withdrew from the cases or notified the parties that she was a stockholder, as required when a judge becomes aware of a significant financial conflict of interest."

Taken together, Ziegler has sided in favor West Bend Savings Bank and her stock interests in 90% of the cases where she was the judge.

Failing to disclose a conflict would put a judge in violation of rules enforced by the high court. A judge who violates Supreme Court rules is subject to reprimand, censure, suspension or removal.

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