

# WISCONSIN ELECTIONS COMMISSION

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December 21, 2017

The Honorable Scott Fitzgerald  
Room 211 South  
State Capitol  
PO Box 7882  
Madison, WI 53707-7882

The Honorable Robin Vos  
Room 211 West  
State Capitol  
PO Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Senator Fitzgerald and Speaker Vos:

I am writing to express my concern regarding public statements each of you have made regarding my work on the staff of the Government Accountability Board (G.A.B.) and as Interim Administrator of the Wisconsin Elections Commission. Specifically, each of you have made references to a purported possibility or likelihood that I and other staff of the G.A.B. engaged in criminal conduct while performing our responsibilities for that agency. As you are undoubtedly aware, these statements have no factual or legal basis. I believe they may constitute slander and I am respectfully requesting an immediate public apology and correction.

In a letter to Attorney General Brad Schimel dated December 19, 2017, Senator Fitzgerald stated that "There is enough evidence that GAB staff were acting incompetently at best, and criminally at worst, in the years surrounding the recall elections of 2011 & 2012." Regardless of your view of the wisdom of the G.A.B.'s investigations and actions, there is absolutely no basis for alleging that G.A.B. staff possibly acted criminally during those years or in subsequent years. To the contrary, G.A.B.'s management of the election events in the hyper-partisan atmosphere which occurred during those years demonstrated an extremely high level of competence.

In an interview with Wisconsin Radio Network and article published December 20, 2017, Speaker Vos stated "The idea that individuals who potentially are on the short list of having committed a crime are now going to be in charge of running ethics and elections seems preposterous to me." The article stated that this remark was made while Speaker Vos defended his calls for the resignations of myself and Ethics Administrator Brian Bell. Again, there is absolutely no basis for alleging that Mr. Bell or I are potentially on any short list of having committed any crime, much less have committed any crimes.

My work as Staff Counsel and then Elections Division Administrator was barely mentioned in the Attorney General's report regarding investigations conducted by the G.A.B. Nevertheless, legislators and others who were not privy to the evidence analyzed and considered by the G.A.B. staff and its Board have issued angry statements blaming me and calling for the Senate to deny confirmation of my appointment as Elections Commission Administrator. Still, neither the Attorney General nor any elected official has articulated either to me or in public what I supposedly did wrong as a member of the G.A.B. staff or related to its investigations.

Your statements implying that I have been involved in criminal activity are verifiably false, and you have not offered the least bit of evidence to support those claims. You are aware that those statements are untrue and yet you made them with the intent that they would be made public and reported by the media.

As elected representatives and leaders of the Legislature, you help to set the tone of civil discourse and political debate, as well as the statements and opinions of your colleagues. Your elected offices and leadership positions do not give you license to defame and slander my personal and professional reputation or that of other staff affiliated with this agency or the G.A.B., and to use those false statements to negatively impact my career. In short, I am requesting that you stop trashing my name and reputation.

I request and trust that you will clarify your remarks and issue a public apology. I am also requesting to meet with each of you prior to the Senate considering confirmation of my appointment as Administrator. Finally, I am calling on representatives of the media to demand support for any statements alleging criminal behavior and to carefully consider whether to publish careless statements accusing either me or other members of the G.A.B. or its staff of criminal conduct.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Haas". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michael Haas  
Interim Administrator  
Wisconsin Elections Commission

cc: Members, Wisconsin Elections Commission