



210 N. Bassett Street, Suite 215
Madison, WI 53703
608.255.4260

www.wiscd.org
www.impartialjustice.org



ed one of worst \$1.5 million spent on ads in court race

Wisconsin is heading down a very dangerous path. This election could do tremendous harm to the public's confidence in and understanding of the court.

— Mike McCabe, Wisconsin Democracy Campaign

After bitter race, calls for reform

Election process hurt high court standing, some say

Madison — The election of Justice Bradley and Michael Bradley to the Wisconsin Supreme Court turned the court into a partisan battleground, just as the state's judicial system is being restructured.

by STEVEN WALTERS, STACY FORSTER and PATRICK MARLEY
swalters@journalnews.com

Madison — The election of Justice Bradley and Michael Bradley to the Wisconsin Supreme Court turned the court into a partisan battleground, just as the state's judicial system is being restructured.

for change in how the Supreme Court Justice continues to grow as a force in the race for groups.

indicates them as Justice Bradley and Michael Bradley.

able bill proves campaign reform need

A majority of the state Senate thumbed its nose at the consumer advocates, who wanted some safeguards to be put in place to protect the funding of public access to cable TV firms are required.

If the Assembly could make by the Senate the measure, and the local control of cable TV would be in the hands of the Department of Public Safety.

Conflict of interest concerns don't stop DNR donations

supporting the legislation of indignation from the public.

**Wisconsin is courting disaster.
The scales of justice are**

OUT OF BALANCE.

Our justice system is built on a bedrock principle. Judges aren't supposed to **BELONG TO ANYONE.**

Judges are supposed to be accountable only to the law and the constitution. But recent Wisconsin Supreme Court elections have made it clear that wealthy interests aim to take control of state courts and bend justice to serve their purposes.

A Crisis of Confidence in Our Courts

A national Republican polling firm, American Viewpoint, surveyed public opinion in Wisconsin in January 2008 and found only 5% of state residents believe that campaign contributions to judges do not influence decisions, while 78% believe they do influence decisions. The rest were unsure. A national independent polling firm, Belden Russonello and Stewart polled Wisconsin residents in May 2008 and found nearly half (47%) believe judges' decisions are based on politics and special interest pressure, while 50% believe rulings are based on facts and the law.

The Public is Worried for Good Reason

Wisconsin has been electing its Supreme Court for over 150 years. For a century and a half, this system produced a high court that earned the public's trust and confidence. But recent high court elections shattered the mold.

Outlandishly expensive. The 2007 race was four times more expensive than any past race. The 2008 election was even more expensive than 2007. About \$12 million was spent on the last two races. At least \$8 million of that—or two out of every three dollars—was spent not by the

candidates but by five special interest groups. In the 2008 race, 90% of the TV advertising was done by four groups.

Overtly partisan. The campaigns were run by party operatives. The campaign fundraising lists resembled those of candidates for statewide partisan offices.

Downright nasty. Advertising was often highly misleading and sometimes downright untruthful. And it was unrelentingly negative and filled with personal attacks.

"In too many states, judicial elections are becoming political prizefights where partisans and special interests seek to install judges who will answer to them instead of the law and the Constitution." —former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor

There Is a Way Out.

All seven members of the Wisconsin Supreme Court signed a letter supporting the idea of public financing of contests for the high court.

The public wants publicly financed Supreme Court elections.

American Viewpoint found that 65% support it, and after hearing arguments both for and against the idea support went up to 75%. Belden Russonello and Stewart's polling found that 85% believe public financing would make a difference and 54% believe it would make a "big difference."

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