

High-Powered Attorneys Line Up in John Doe Case

EDWARD MEYERS, PHILIP O'BEIRNE, AND MICHAEL BRESNICK LISTED AS REPRESENTING UNNAMED PETITIONER IN THE JOHN DOE INVESTIGATION INTO GOV. SCOTT WALKER'S CAMPAIGN

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The identities of the three people seeking to stop the John Doe investigation into Gov. Scott Walker's campaign and more than two dozen conservative political groups remain a secret.

But the names of their seven attorneys are public, and it's an impressive list. It includes a former U.S. attorney in Missouri, one of Madison's top criminal defense lawyers and the former head of the federal task force investigating financial fraud by the nation's major banks.

Five petitions were filed last week seeking to halt the secret investigation launched in February 2012 in Milwaukee County that has spread to Dane, Iowa, Dodge and Columbia counties. The petitions were filed in the 4th District Court of Appeals against Reserve Judge Gregory Peterson, who is overseeing the probe.

Investigators are looking into recall-related activities by Walker's campaign, unnamed legislative leaders and 29 Republican and local and national conservative groups, including the Republican Party of Wisconsin, Americans for Prosperity, Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce and the Wisconsin Club for Growth, according to a Wall Street Journal report.

Unnamed petitioner No. 1

The attorney for the first unnamed petitioner is Dean Strang, a well-known Madison criminal defense lawyer who represented William Gardner, then-owner of Wisconsin and Southern Railroad, in the first John Doe investigation covering activities when Walker was the Milwaukee County executive. Gardner pleaded guilty to evading campaign finance laws by laundering his contributions to Walker's gubernatorial campaign and others through Wisconsin and Southern employees.

Strang also has represented Steven Avery, who was wrongfully convicted of sexual assault who was freed but then later convicted of murder; and Eugene Zapata, who confessed to killing his wife 31 years after she disappeared in Madison. Strang also was co-counsel on the landmark 2005 case, United States vs. Booker, that declared mandatory federal sentencing guidelines unconstitutional.

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Unnamed petitioner No. 2

Representing unnamed petitioner No. 2 is Milwaukee attorney Matthew O'Neill, who was part of the legal team that helped former Assembly Speaker Scott Jensen overturn his 2006 felony convictions related to illegal campaign activity. Jensen got the case transferred to Waukesha County, where District Attorney Brad Schimel, a candidate for attorney general, agreed to dismiss the case in exchange for a \$5,000 fine and a \$67,000 repayment to the state for legal fees. Among O'Neill's specialties listed on the Fox O'Neill Shannon law firm website are campaign and election law.

Other attorneys representing unnamed petitioner No. 2 are Todd Graves and Edward Greim, who practice with the firm of Graves Garrett in Kansas City, Mo. Greim specializes in free speech and election law, including launching "numerous" constitutional challenges to election and campaign finance laws, according to the firm's website. Greim also oversaw the internal investigation into the handling of clergy sexual abuse by the Catholic Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

Graves is the former U.S. attorney for the Western District of Missouri. Graves lists expertise including white-collar criminal defense, political speech and election law. Graves was among a group of nine U.S. attorneys fired by then-White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales in what was seen as political retribution.

A U.S. Department of Justice investigation later concluded that Graves' 2006 ouster stemmed from a spat between staff members for Graves' brother, a Republican congressman from Missouri, and the staff of Sen. Kit Bond, R-Mo.

In May, after his firm landed a contract to investigate Missouri's handling of personal information of gun permit holders, Graves told the Kansas City Business Journal, "We've become the go-to Republican firm."

Unnamed petitioner No. 3

Three attorneys -- Edward H. Meyers, Philip O'Beirne and Michael Bresnick -- are listed as representing the second unnamed petitioner, all from the Washington, D.C., law firm of Stein Mitchell Muse & Cippollone.

Meyers is a civil attorney whose biography lists him as counsel for "an international construction company in an arbitration of the largest construction project in the history of Wisconsin."

Bechtel Power Corp. had filed a claim for \$515 million with We Energies, saying labor- and weather-related factors had increased the cost of building two coal-fired power plants in Oak Creek.

The \$2.2 billion behemoth was described as the most expensive construction project in state history. The companies reached settlement in 2009 following arbitration, with We Energies agreeing to pay Bechtel \$72 million more to compensate for the added costs.

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O'Beirne's specialties include handling complex litigation, including white-collar criminal defense. He also worked as a military prosecutor in the high-profile 2010 case of an Army doctor who disobeyed orders to deploy to Afghanistan because he questioned whether President Barack Obama was born in the United States and thus eligible to be commander in chief. Lt. Col. Terrence Lakin was dismissed from the Army and sentenced to six months' incarceration.

Also representing the third unnamed petitioner is former top U.S. Department of Justice attorney Michael Bresnick. Bresnick joined the Stein Mitchell firm in Washington, D.C., in August after serving as the executive director of Obama's Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force.

That organization last week reached a \$13 billion settlement with JPMorgan Chase for misrepresenting the value and security of mortgage-backed securities, actions that helped plunge the U.S. economy into recession.

The task force describes the deal as "the largest settlement with a single entity in American history."

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