

# A BENEDICTION FOR THE G.A.B.

As the Government Accountability Board concludes its work, I would like to offer a benediction.

**I give thanks** for the privilege of serving the people of the State of Wisconsin for nine years as a member of the Board.

**I give thanks** to the esteemed reserve judges who served independently during the Board's existence.

**I give thanks** to the professional, hard-working staff members of the G.A.B. for their many accomplishments during the last eight-and-a-half years:

- ❖ For serving and training the 1,854 municipal and 72 county clerks, and the thousands and thousands of chief inspectors and poll workers throughout this state.
- ❖ For maintaining and rebuilding our state's voter registration list election and management system, now known as WisVote.
- ❖ For ensuring that Wisconsin's diverse polling places are accessible to people with disabilities.
- ❖ For developing transparency websites to provide the public with information about campaign finance spending, lobbying and financial disclosure.
- ❖ For handling the 15 recall elections of State Senators and the Governor and Lt. Governor, which included reviewing nearly two million petition signatures under strict timelines.

**I give thanks** to Director and General Counsel Kevin Kennedy, Elections Division Administrator Michael Haas, and Ethics & Accountability Division Administrator Jonathan Becker for their integrity and professionalism in serving the Board, sometimes under very trying circumstances.

**I give thanks** to the Board for evaluating complaints about violations of statutes over which it had jurisdiction based upon the facts and the law, not the status of any party who was the subject of a complaint, including the John Doe II investigation. The case started with a Democratic District Attorney and was referred to us by a Republican Attorney General. The Board fulfilled its duty to conduct a nonpartisan search for truth in enforcing established Wisconsin case law banning campaign coordination with outside groups, but it was cut short by politicians and outside groups who want no accountability, and it led to legislation abolishing the agency for doing its job.

**Finally, I pray:**

- ❖ That the two new commissions will put aside partisan politics in executing their duties and meeting their obligations.
- ❖ That the public will come to its senses and demand its leaders pass legislation to outlaw coordination in campaign finance and reverse the Wisconsin Supreme Court decision which undermined campaign finance accountability by allowing unlimited contributions without accountability.

**Judge Gerald C. Nichol | G.A.B. Member, 2008-2016**

**June 9, 2016**