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MICHAEL J. MURPHY
ALDERMAN, 10TH DISTRICT

Leaked documents show waste of millions just to stir GOP voters

Statement from Alderman Michael J. Murphy September 16, 2016

As a taxpayer and as chair of the Judiciary and Legislation Committee, it is troubling to see the comments posted today by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* from Steve Baas, senior vice president with the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce.

In the piece written by Daniel Bice (“**John Doe leak offers insights**”), a leaked document (email) has Baas discussing making up concerns about voter fraud in an effort to stir up the Republican base immediately after then-Supreme Court Justice David Prosser barely squeaked by challenger Joanne Kloppenburg in April 2011.

In the April 6, 2011 email Baas states: “Do we need to start messaging ‘widespread reports of election fraud’ so we are positively set up for the recount regardless of the final number? I obviously think we should.”

The cynical attempt by Baas – who was conversing at the time with, according to the article, “a group of conservative operatives” – to manipulate public opinion by making stuff up, without any evidence of actual voter fraud, is dark and disturbing. The entire Voter ID effort on the part of the state GOP is based on nearly non-existent voter fraud (one report I read suggests there have been 30 cases statewide since 2008!) and is directly causing voter suppression among the poor, seniors, and even students.

The Legislative Fiscal Bureau has indicated that the price tag to put in place Voter ID has cost taxpayers about \$6 million so far. What a colossal waste of taxpayer dollars.

We could have saved the \$6 million, or we could have used \$6 million for protecting children in Milwaukee and across the state from lead poisoning. We could have used the money to increase education and outreach to encourage people to vote. Or, we could have used \$6 million to help get voters to the polls, to improve voting locations and equipment, or for a whole myriad of other helpful and productive measures.

I have a suggestion for the MMAC and for Baas: It would be great if you could help directly fund City of Milwaukee community outreach to encourage voting, and it would be most helpful if you can help fund the expansion of our in-person absentee voting sites and hours (which have helped thousands of voters more easily take part in our elections and our democratic process).

Let’s see your action, and your funding, outdo your cynicism.

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