

**For Immediate release**

**January 24, 2022 – Racine Wisconsin**

**RACINE RESIDENTS FILE ELECTION BRIBERY CASE**

Racine residents Sandy Weidner and Kim Morrison filed a complaint against respondents Racine Mayor Cory Mason and Racine City Clerk Tara Coolidge as their City entered into an agreement with Center for Tech and Civic Life which constituted prohibited election bribery under Wisconsin Statutes § 12.11. Any agreement where the City's election officials receive Center for Tech and Civic Life's private money to facilitate in-person and absentee voting within the city violates Wisconsin Statutes § 12.11's prohibition on election bribery. The city of Racine received \$1,699,000 of the Zuckerberg money funneled through the Center for Tech and Civic Life.

In the Wisconsin Safe Voting Plan agreement, signed by Mayor Mason, the Mayor agreed to take Center for Tech and Civic Life's money to facilitate in-person and absentee voting within their city. Conditions contained within the worksheets and the Center for Tech and Civic Life acceptance letter committed their city to spending CTCL's transferred money in accordance with the Wisconsin Safe Voting Plan. Wisconsin Statutes § 12.11 on election bribery, in relevant part, prohibits a city from receiving money to facilitate electors to go to the polls or to facilitate electors to vote absentee.

WHEREFORE, Complainants respectfully request the Commission to investigate this matter, including compelling document production, depositions and testimony of the Respondents, elected officials, election officials, municipal employees, Tiana Epps-Johnson and her employer Center for Tech and Civic Life, Michael Spitzer-Rubenstein and his employer National Vote at

Home Institute, Ryan Chew and his employer The Elections Group, Ideas42, Power the Polls, Mikva Challenge, US Digital Response, Center for Civic Design, Eric Ming and his employer CSME, Brennan Center, HVS Productions, and Modern Selections and others involved, to conduct an evidentiary hearing and to summarily deciding the claims before it. The Complainants request the Commission to issue an order requiring the Respondents and their City to conform their conduct to Wisconsin Statutes § 12.11 and the Elections and Electors Clauses, restrain themselves from further election bribery under Wisconsin Statutes § 12.11 and to require them to correct their actions and decisions inconsistent with the prohibition of Wisconsin Statutes § 12.11 on election bribery and requirement to follow state law found in the Elections Clause and Electors Clause. The Commission should also grant any other relief it deems proper, necessary, or just, consistent with the law and under the circumstances of this case.

Further, use of absentee ballot drop boxes, outside of narrow exceptions, has been successfully challenged as being inconsistent with Wisconsin law. In a case in the Wisconsin Circuit Court for Waukesha County, the plaintiffs sued the WEC to challenge 2020 guidance memos that the WEC issued to municipal clerks. Complaint, *Teigen v. Wisconsin Elections Commission*, No. 21-CV-958 (Wis. Cir. Ct. for Waukesha Cnty. June 28, 2021), *available at* App. 649-660. The money to deploy these unlawful absentee ballot drop boxes came from the CTCL funding.

