Wisconsin

Butler TV spot responds to allegations

Gableman ad draws complaint filing

By *Stacy Forster* of the Journal Sentinel

Posted: Mar. 19, 2008

Butler

Gableman

State Supreme Court Justice Louis Butler hit back Tuesday against allegations that he's soft on crime, launching an ad that features law enforcement officials praising him and criticizing what they call false attacks from Burnett County Circuit Judge Mike Gableman.

Meanwhile, a public interest group on Tuesday filed a complaint with the state's Judicial Commission over a controversial ad from Gableman.

Some say the Gableman ad released last week misrepresents the facts of a case Butler handled as a public defender in the 1980s. Gableman's campaign continued to defend the ad as factual and argued that Gableman has greater support from law enforcement.

Butler's latest ad doesn't directly refer to Gableman's ad but does accuse Gableman of "making despicable attacks" and is followed by statements from law enforcement officers who dispute Gableman's characterizations.

It ends with Wood County Sheriff Tom Reichert saying, "Justice Butler has been a great justice for law enforcement."

In a statement, Gableman campaign adviser Darrin Schmitz said voters will "see this ad for what it is . . . a fraud."

"The majority of Wisconsin sheriffs and district attorneys have endorsed Judge Gableman, due in part to Louis Butler's record of tying the hands of law enforcement and siding with criminals," Schmitz said.

Also Tuesday, Citizen Action of Wisconsin asked the Judicial Commission to investigate whether the ad from Gableman's campaign about Butler's public defender work for convicted child molester Reuben Lee Mitchell violates the judicial code of conduct and misrepresents the facts.

The ad says Butler found a loophole and that Mitchell went on to molest another child; what it doesn't say is that Butler represented Mitchell before the state Court of Appeals, which overturned Mitchell's conviction. The state Supreme Court reinstated it, however. Mitchell committed the later crime after serving his sentence.

The judicial code says candidates for judicial office shall not knowingly misrepresent the identity, qualifications, present position, or other facts concerning the candidate or an opponent, or make representations that - although true - are misleading or may confuse the public about the proper role of judges and lawyers in the judicial system.

"If Mike Gableman is willing to mislead the public and violate the judicial ethics code merely for political gain, think about what he would do on the bench," Robert Kraig of Citizen Action of Wisconsin said in a statement.

Gableman campaign adviser Schmitz downplayed the complaint, saying it was a "stunt from a left-leaning" group and was filled with "meritless claims and falsehoods."

In an interview, Schmitz said the ad makes it clear in a graphic that Butler was a public defender at the time, and that Butler's arguments resulted in an overturned conviction.

In a statement, the Judicial Commission acknowledged that it had received the request for investigation, which will be reviewed by the commission. The panel's next meeting is April 25 - more than three weeks after the April 1 election.

Data on Demand

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS TO WISCONSIN SUPREME COURT CANDIDATES: CLICK HERE to search a database of 2,100 contributions made by individuals and political action committees to the two Wisconsin Supreme Court candidates, Louis Butler and Mike Gableman.

WISCONSIN SUPREME COURT ENDORSEMENTS: CLICK HERE to search a database of more than 300 Wisconsin Supreme Court endorsements made by judges, alderman and other officials.

Online Chats

State Supreme Court

advertisement

TOP STORIES

- Hamilton accused of felony child abuse
- Dolan hopes to restore pride in being a Catholic
- UWM doctoral graduates protest pricey commencement attire
- Budget panel gains clout
- Gardening is growing, and not just the plants

MORE NEWS

- Pabst shows signs of life
- Go green, save green
- UWM doctoral graduates protest pricey commencement attire
- Hamilton accused of felony child abuse
- Bravery honored
- Door County supervisor files to challenge Kagen
- Injured officer released from hospital
- Budget panel gains clout

Most Popular - News

most read | e-mailed

- College professors earn less in Wisconsin, report finds
- Autopilot cited in fatal crash
- Proposal threatens civic projects
- Injured officer released from hospital
- Oak Creek considers imposing $156,000 fee for junkyard cleanup

more most popular content...

candidates Louis Butler and Michael Gableman will answer questions in separate online chats.

- Louis Butler, noon Friday, March 21
- Michael Gableman, 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 26

More Coverage

SPECIAL SECTION: Complete coverage of the 2008 Elections and state and local politics

Also see:

- AllPolitics Blog
- State and Local Elections
- Capitol Podcast
- Inside State Politics

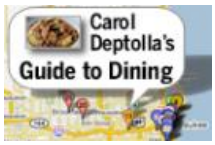
NewsWatch Delivered
Get the latest local news delivered to your inbox M-F during the noon hour..

Elsewhere on JSOnline

Readers' Picks

Best Brew Town bratwurst?

Dining Guide



Our critic's reviews on a Google map

Hubub Blog

What Milwaukee is talking about

Section

Following the Money: How stimulus funds are being spent

Twitter

Follow Journal Sentinel staff on Twitter

Your Photos

Submit your photos to our reader galleries

advertisement

© 2009, Journal Sentinel Inc. All rights reserved.
Powered by Clickability.
Produced and Managed by Journal Interactive.