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April 6, 2017

The Honorable Patience D. Roggensack  
Chief Justice  
Wisconsin Supreme Court  
P.O. Box 1688  
Madison, WI 53701-1688

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CLERK OF SUPREME COURT  
OF WISCONSIN

Re: Rule Petition 17-01

Dear Chief Justice Roggensack:

On behalf of Wisconsin Voices, I am submitting this letter in favor of Rule Petition 17-01, which requests that the Court amend the Code of Judicial Conduct to establish an objective standard for requiring recusal or disqualification of a judge who has received campaign contributions or assistance from a party or lawyer.

Wisconsin Voices' works with over 50 local and statewide nonprofit organizations to protect and strengthen our democracy. At the heart of that democracy is the core tenet that all citizens deserve a fair chance to be listened to and considered by all branches of government, including in front of our judicial system.

Wisconsin was once known for its legacy of open and honest government, respect for bipartisanship, and ability to focus on genuine problem-solving instead of partisan maneuvering. These values are still deeply imbedded in the state's people, but Wisconsin's prominence as the exemplar for a fair and accessible democracy has been tainted. Our democracy simply will not function properly if our judicial decisions can be bought with campaign contributions.

Wisconsinites should be able to be confident beyond question that judges are not being influenced by outside expenditures from the ultra-rich and corporations. Average citizens all share the same desire for fairness and an honest, transparent, and untainted democratic process.

Wisconsin Voices thanks you for the opportunity to submit comment and urges you to advance this recusal rule.

Sincerely,

Dana Schultz  
Executive Director  
Wisconsin Voices