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AP provides blueprint for the fall campaign

Republicans mentioned in Jensen trial:

MADISON, Wis. (AP) - Scott Jensen used to be Assembly Republicans' leader. Now Democrats hope his GOP colleagues suffer in November because of him.

By The Associated Press, State Wire

The names of about two dozen Republicans and their operatives surfaced during testimony in state Rep. Scott Jensen's misconduct trial, suggesting some got taxpayer-funded campaign help from state workers or were involved in campaign activities on state time.

Jensen was found guilty of three felony misconduct in office charges and a misdemeanor. Prosecutors accused him of using his Capitol staff and state workers at the Assembly Republican Caucus to campaign for GOP candidates, including himself. State workers in the caucus were supposed to do policy research for lawmakers.

He also was accused of putting Sherry Schultz on the state payroll to function only as a GOP fundraiser. Schultz was found guilty of one felony misconduct count.

The charges stemmed from an investigation into corruption at the Capitol that was sparked by stories in the Wisconsin State Journal in 2001 detailing allegations of state workers campaigning on state time.

A string of current and former state workers testified during the trial, including: former caucus graphic artists Eric Grant and Kacy Hack; former caucus directors Jason Kratochwill and Ray Carey; former caucus workers Brian Dake and Bill Cosh; and legislative staffer Rose Smyrski. Sharon Bartels, state Rep. Gabe Loeffelholz's campaign treasurer in 2000, and Stacy Ascher-Knowlton, state Rep. Don Friske's campaign treasurer in 2000, also testified.

Here are some of the Republicans whose names came up in the trial, what was said about them and their reactions:

-U.S. Rep. Mark Green. Grant testified then-caucus media director Chris Tuttle signed off on state workers' campaign assignments. Grant also said Green aide Mark Graul requested campaign work from him for Green while Green was in the Legislature. Tuttle is now Green's congressional chief of staff and Graul is managing his campaign for governor.

Green campaign spokesman Rob Vernon said Green's campaign contracted with Grant for work, but where and when Grant did the work was up to him. Graul doesn't remember when or where he spoke to Grant about work orders, he said, and Green didn't know Tuttle was signing off on campaign work.

-Bruce Pfaff. Grant testified Pfaff, then a Jensen Capitol staffer, delivered caucus-produced campaign materials in 1998. Pfaff, now campaign manager for Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, another GOP gubernatorial hopeful in Wisconsin, told The Associated Press he sometimes delivered campaign materials when he worked as a policy analyst for Jensen in 1998, but he did it on his own time.

-State Rep. Rob Kreibich, R-Eau Claire. Grant said he produced Wisconsin Badgers and Green Bay Packers football schedules for the campaigns of Kreibich and Green. Kreibich didn't return a message the AP left at his Capitol office.

-Assembly Speaker John Gard, R-Peshtigo. According to testimony, Gard sat in on campaign meetings and was present at a meeting between Jensen and Kratochwill about moving Schultz to the state GOP headquarters after the newspaper stories broke. Gard is running for Congress this fall.

"The speaker has never been accused of any wrongdoing. We'll just stick to that," said Gard's spokeswoman, Christine Mangi.

-State Rep. Jeff Stone, R-Greendale. Dake testified he worked on Stone's campaign in 1998. He testified he thought the state Republican Party paid at least some of his salary while he was in the field. Dake said he reported Stone's finances to Schultz and helped prepare Stone's campaign finance reports.

Carey testified he developed a campaign plan for Stone's district in 1997; Stone was elected in an April 1998 special election. Stone has said he didn't know Dake may have been on state time, adding he played a limited role.

-State Rep. Garey Bies, R-Sister Bay. Dake said he also helped Bies' campaign. Bies said he didn't know what Dake did on his campaign "other than call me on an occasional basis to see if I was out campaigning." Bies said after he won the GOP primary in 2000, Jensen visited him and told him to lose weight. Bies said he was insulted and didn't pay any attention to what political operatives in Madison told him.

-State Rep. Judy Krawczyk, R-Green Bay. Dake said he helped her campaign, too. Krawczyk said Dake showed up on weekends. She knew he worked in

Madison but didn't know he was part of the Legislature.

"Never did I ever imagine that anything I was doing was illegal. I am hoping it wasn't," she said. "Whose campaign didn't it touch? I was a freshman. I was unknowledgeable."

State Rep. Phil Montgomery, R-Green Bay. Dake testified he stayed in Montgomery's basement while he worked on Bies and Krawczyk's campaigns. Montgomery didn't return messages left on his cell phone or at his Capitol office and district listings.

-State Sen. Neal Kedzie, R-Elkhorn. Smyrski testified she worked for Kedzie, R-Elkhorn, when he was in the Assembly in 2000. She was dispatched to northwestern Wisconsin to work on Rep. Mark Pettis' campaign, but she took leave from Kedzie's state payroll. She used a state computer at the caucus to make a list of hosts for a Kedzie fundraiser, she said, and brought a disk with Kedzie's campaign finances on it to the caucus.

Kedzie didn't return messages left at his Capitol office and district listing.

-State Rep. Jerry Petrowski, R-Marathon. Cosh testified he worked on Petrowski's campaign. He said he went 30 percent off the state payroll to focus full-time on Petrowski's campaign in August 2000.

Ascher-Knowlton, Rep. Don Friske's campaign treasurer, testified Petrowski's daughter, told her Schultz worked closely with their campaign and recommended Ascher-Knowlton call Schultz for help with Friske's finances. Kratochwill testified he helped set up TV ad shoots for Petrowski.

Petrowski didn't return messages left at his Capitol office and district listing.

-State Rep. Terry Musser, R-Black River Falls. Cosh said he made fundraising calls from the caucus on Musser's behalf. Musser said he had no idea Cosh raised any money for him.

"I didn't even know Bill Cosh was making those calls. Whether people believe me or not, that's up to them. Leave it up to the voters. That's why we have elections every two years."

-State Rep. Dan Meyer, R-Eagle River. Cosh testified he offered campaign help to Meyer in 2000 as well, but Meyer wouldn't take it. However, Cosh later said a caucus photographer took Meyer's photograph, and a Cosh strategy report shows Meyer had nomination papers taken to the caucus to be dropped off at the state

Elections Board. Meyer didn't return messages left at his Capitol office and district listing.

State Rep. Steve Kestell, R-Elkhart Lake. Kestell testified he met Schultz at the Capitol. He called her with questions about his campaign finances because the state Elections Board wasn't helpful. Kestell testified Schultz never did fundraising for him or told him to expect checks. He doesn't remember her asking for updates about his campaign.

State Rep. Gabe Loeffelholz, R-Platteville. Bartels testified she served as Loeffelholz's campaign treasurer in 2000 and contacted Schultz for help with Loeffelholz's campaign finance reports. She updated Schultz on how close Loeffelholz was to reaching contribution limits. Schultz also would contact her to let her know to expect checks from contributors. She said she thought Schultz worked for the state Elections Board.

Kratochwill testified he wrote a closing plan for Loeffelholz's campaign. Loeffelholz didn't return a message left at his Capitol office.

State Rep. Don Friske, R-Merrill. Ascher-Knowlton testified she struggled with campaign finance reports. She got help from Schultz, faxing documents to her and staying in weekly contact. Schultz mailed checks from political action committees to her, she said, and told her once Friske got elected he would be expected to donate money for other GOP challengers in turn.

"She was my angel. Yes, she was," Ascher-Knowlton told the jury.

Two caucus graphic artists testified they did work for Friske's campaign.

Friske told the AP he knew Ascher-Knowlton was getting help from Schultz on finance reports, but he thought Schultz might have been working for the state Republican Party.

"We didn't know where Sherry worked or anything Sherry was doing was illegal," Friske said.

He said all his campaign literature was done by Petrowski's daughter, who served as his campaign manager. He was busy working full-time and going door-to-door meeting constituents, he said.

"I put my trust in my campaign manager and my treasurer ... they were left to their job and I had mine."

State Rep. Terri McCormick, R-Appleton. Hack testified she did campaign work for McCormick.

McCormick, who is running for Congress, denied to the AP that Hack did any work for her. She said she ran her own races.

Her campaign manager, Tracy Mangold, has issued a statement saying McCormick never "procured" any help from a caucus graphic artist and she was considering suing Hack for slander.

State Supreme Court Justice David Prosser. Prosser was the Assembly speaker when Jensen was director of the Assembly Republican Caucus in the 1980s. Jensen testified Prosser ordered him to meet with legislators' staffs to devise plans to get them re-elected.

Prosser himself testified, saying Jensen was a man of his word.

State courts spokeswoman Amanda Todd didn't return a message seeking an interview with Prosser.

State Rep. Kitty Rhoades, R-Hudson. Cosh's reports indicate he was checking in with Rhoades' campaign status. Rhoades didn't return messages left at her Capitol office or district listing.

State Rep. Mark Pettis, R-Hertel. Smyrski testified she helped work on Pettis' campaign in 2000 while working in Kedzie's state office, but said she took leave. She also said she put Pettis' treasurer in touch with Schultz for help with campaign finances and had graphic artists at the caucus prepare campaign material for Pettis.

Cosh testified he put together campaign mailings at the caucus for Pettis and oversaw his campaign beginning in the spring of 2000 until he left to help Petrowski. His campaign field reports show Hack was working on stationary for Pettis in 2000. Pettis didn't return a message left at his Capitol office.

State Rep. Gregg Underheim, R-Oshkosh. Grant testified he did campaign literature for him. Underheim declined comment.

State Sen. Joe Leibham, R-Sheboygan. Kratochwill testified Leibham was considered a vulnerable candidate when Leibham was in the Assembly in 2000 when Kratochwill met with Jensen in his office to discuss assigning field staff. He also testified he set up TV ad shoots for Leibham that year.

Leibham didn't return messages left at his Capitol office and district listing.

State Rep. Eugene Hahn, R-Cambria. Kratochwill testified he helped set up TV ad shots for Hahn in 2000. Hahn told the AP the caucus brought in a firm to do the shoots, and half-a-dozen Republicans took turns filming at locations.

"I didn't question. I was just told to be there," Hahn said.

He acknowledged he got caucus help, but didn't know they were on state time.

"I win the primary, the next thing I know I got a couple people from the caucus up meeting with me and my people," Hahn said. "Locally, we don't know how to run a campaign. They've been at it for years. They told us what to do next ... I never gave it a thought if they went off the state payroll or were on the party payroll."

The last thing he thought he would be doing while campaigning was analyzing his workers' conduct, he added.

"It never crossed my mind whether they were being paid by the state," Hahn said.

State Rep. Stephen Freese, R-Dodgeville. Kratochwill testified that he doubled as Freese's campaign manager in 1992 while working on Sen. Dale Schultz's state payroll. Jensen testified Freese was sometimes present at leadership meetings where campaigns were discussed.

Freese told the AP he was at policy meetings, but didn't remember being at any leadership meetings that were purely political. He and Jensen didn't get along because they ran against each for speaker in 1997.

He said Kratochwill worked on his campaign on nights and weekends, when he was off the state clock.

Former state Rep. Steve Foti, R-Oconomowoc. The former Assembly majority leader was charged in 2002 with felony misconduct in office for hiring Schultz. He pleaded guilty to misdemeanor conduct late last year in a deal with prosecutors that called for him to testify against Jensen. Prosecutors agreed to recommend he serve 30 days in jail in return. He is scheduled to be sentenced Monday.

Former state Rep. Bonnie Ladwig, R-Racine. The former Assembly assistant majority leader was charged in 2002 with a misdemeanor ethics violation for using her position to obtain financial gain for the Republican Assembly Committee, a group that campaigns for GOP candidates. Ladwig pleaded guilty late last year in a

deal with prosecutors. They agreed they would not recommend jail time in exchange for her plea. She is scheduled to be sentenced in May.