

Wisconsin • Primary Election • September 12, 2006

Attempt to dislodge choice supporter in primary halted by ACM research

Voting twice in 2000 Election dooms primary opponent to Democratic State Senator and choice supporter Jeff Plale

Unexpected twists and late-breaking revelations are not uncommon in elections. It's part of what makes elections so unpredictable.

Most of these moments are due to the highly important and behind-the-scenes work of



political researchers who dig through public records and mountains of news clippings.

Many candidates express indignation at the degree to which their lives are subject to public scrutiny, and there are many reasonable arguments on both sides of that issue, but in the case of former state Senate candidate Donovan Riley (D) what he was hiding has lead to a felony charge.

Riley was challenging Milwaukee State Senator Jeff Plale (D) in the primary. Plale, a maverick from the city, has found himself criticized from all sides over the years. He also has been a strong supporter of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, one of several reasons that Riley chose to challenge Plale.

Riley's primary challenge was considered extremely strong. The former CEO of the University of Illinois Hospital, and with considerable experience in state government in Wisconsin, Riley had already developed a strong core of supporters within segments of the district and had pumped \$60,000 of personal money into the race. Riley was not going to be a pushover for the incumbent, Plale.

All Children Matter does not expressly advocate for the elec-

tion or defeat of candidates in Wisconsin, because of campaign finance laws, but it can inform voters about important issues and contrast the positions of candidates. To this end, ACM was doing research on the candidates when it uncovered Riley's double voting in 2000.

Riley was splitting time between Chicago and Wisconsin. He was already a registered voter in Illinois, but on Monday, November 6, 2000, he registered in Wisconsin, and then voted there the next day, Election Day 2000. Voting records show he also voted in Illinois that day. Riley didn't once deny the charges, despite repeated requests from fellow Democrats to explain the situation.

After ACM's research was publicly revealed in the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, Riley waited for 11 days until Thursday, August 24, 2006, to announce he was withdrawing.

Now, choice supporter Plale is a lock for re-election. Riley's blunder saved ACM significant resources to be focused on other races in Wisconsin.

Despite the relatively calm primary season, there will be a host of competitive races in the general election, including a challenge to Governor Jim Doyle (D) by Congressman Mark Green (R), one of the most closely contested gubernatorial races in the country. Doyle, a choice opponent, was pressured into signing an expansion of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program earlier this year. Green is a champion of school choice.

Candidates, media outlets stunned by ACM's findings



Sen. Jeff Plale

"Wow!" said Plale, who has come under attack from the right and left since winning a Senate seat in 2003. "It's news to me, but you've piqued my curiosity."

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
August 13, 2006



Donovan Riley

"My best recollection is that I was splitting my time between Wisconsin and Illinois, and it's possible I made a mistake. If the Elections Board decides to look into this matter, I will gladly assist."

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
August 13, 2006

Candidate for Senate withdraws under cloud

The Capital Times (Madison)
August 25, 2006

Candidate under investigation for double voting drops out

Associated Press
August 25, 2006

Senate candidate accused of voting twice in 2000 election

Associated Press
August 15, 2006

The more you vote, the better you feel

Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel
August 13, 2006