

Wisconsin documents reveal details of strategy behind Donald Trump's 2020 fake elector scheme

Kevin Reed
7 March 2024

On Monday, documents connected with the settlement of a Wisconsin lawsuit were released revealing important details about the plan by Donald Trump and his supporters to keep the Republican president in the White house by overturning the results of the 2020 elections.

The more than 1,400 pages of emails, text messages and other documents were made public from a civil case against attorneys Kenneth Chesebro and Jim Troupis, along with 10 Wisconsin Republicans who agreed to be fake electors. The case was settled in late February.

The contents of the documents show that, starting five days after the presidential election on November 3, 2020, Chesebro began communicating with the former Wisconsin judge, Troupis, about a scheme to use litigation and the appointment of “alternative” electors to block the certification of Joe Biden as president.

The new documents show that the fascist mob assault on the US Capitol on January 6 was the culmination of a carefully worked out strategy that began immediately after Biden was declared the winner of the 2020 election.

The strategy involved filing a barrage of court cases alleging “systemic abuses,” dragging out the legal process to create “a cloud of confusion,” especially in the battleground states of Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania, then pushing for slates of fake electors to be endorsed by state legislators so as to flip the states from Biden to Trump.

In an email to Troupis dated November 19, 2020, Chesebro wrote that the Trump lawyers should “pursue a shot at having two bites at the apple—litigate, hoping to ultimately win by January 6, but also use delay in

litigation to try to win in the state legislature on December 8.”

According to federal election rules, states must resolve all election-related disputes by what is known as the Safe Harbor Deadline, which was December 8, 2020. Six days later, electors had to meet in each state to cast their votes on paper ballots for president and vice president of the United States.

The purpose of the Trump elector scheme was to create and submit fraudulent certificates that falsely asserted he had won the electoral college vote in the states where the disruption efforts were being conducted. In the end, Trump supporters attempted to change electoral votes in seven key states: Pennsylvania, Georgia, Michigan, Arizona, Wisconsin, Nevada and New Mexico.

As described by the *New York Times*, “Taken together, the documents show in new detail how the Trump campaign’s litigation strategy was not designed to win in court as much as it was designed to give cover for their political efforts.”

Some of the documents refer to a meeting of Troupis, Chesebro and Trump in the Oval Office on December 15, 2020. The meeting was arranged by Republican Party official and former Trump Chief of Staff Reince Priebus.

In one message to Troupis before the meeting, Chesebro wrote: “Pretty clear national people realize this wouldn’t be happening if you and Reince and others hadn’t pushed it!” Indicating the secretive nature of the discussion with Trump, Troupis wrote to Chesebro after the meeting, “Reince was very explicit in his admonition that nothing about our meeting with the President can be shared with anyone.”

Revealing the way the court cases were to be used to overturn the electoral vote process in multiple states, Chesebro wrote in an email on December 26, “If Georgia is pending before the Supreme Court on January 6, a fairly boss move would be for [Vice President Mike] Pence, when he gets to Georgia, to simply decline to open any of the Georgia envelopes.” Here Chesebro was referring to the vice-president’s normally ceremonial role in presiding over the joint session of Congress that officially certifies the Electoral College vote, which was set for January 6, 2021.

In a message to Chesebro at 11:04 am during the January 6 insurrection, Troupis wrote, “Enjoy the history you have made possible today.”

The lawsuit in Wisconsin was filed against the Republican conspirators by the progressive law firm Law Forward and Georgetown University Law Center’s Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection on behalf of a group of Democratic Party electors and Wisconsin voters.

Mary McCord, the director of Georgetown’s Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection, said of the settlement and its connection to the January 6 fascist riot, “As these documents show, the fraudulent electors plot originated in Wisconsin, with Trump campaign attorney James Troupis and legal adviser Ken Chesebro concocting the scheme that ultimately provided the false narrative used by the rioters to justify the attack on the Capitol.”

In settling their portion of the civil lawsuit in December, the 10 fake Trump electors acknowledged that Biden won the state of Wisconsin, withdrew their filings and agreed not to serve as presidential electors in 2024 or any other election where Trump is on the ballot.

Additionally, the fake electors agreed to send a statement to the government offices that received the Electoral College votes saying that their actions were “part of an attempt to improperly overturn the 2020 presidential election results.”

Troupis and Chesebro did not have admit any wrongdoing or liability for the scheme. They simply had to agree not to engage in similar election activities in the future, including not participating in schemes to advance slates of false electors. The settlement also included a payment to the plaintiffs of an undisclosed amount.

Following the release of the documents, Troupis issued a defiant statement saying he agreed to the settlement to “avoid endless litigation, and nothing in today’s settlement constitutes an admission of fault, nor should it.” Meanwhile, as a reward for services rendered and for avoiding criminal prosecution, Troupis was reappointed to the Judicial Conduct Advisory Committee for another two-year term by the Wisconsin Supreme Court on March 2.

Thus, the man who was a key mastermind behind Donald Trump’s criminal months-long post-election drive to overturn the 2020 presidential election is now responsible for rendering “formal advisory opinions” and giving “informal advice” to “judges and judicial officers governed by the Code of Judicial Conduct.”

For his part, Chesebro had already pled guilty in October to a felony count of conspiracy to file false documents in the case brought by the Fulton County (Georgia) prosecutor against 19 people in connection with the fake elector scheme in Georgia.

When asked by the *New York Times* about the revelations, Reince Priebus, who appears regularly as a Republican-aligned pundit on ABC News’ “This Week” program, declined to comment. The *Times* report said, “A person familiar with his [Priebus’] actions said that he had recommended Mr. Troupis as a lawyer in Wisconsin, his home state, to the Trump campaign, but was not involved in the day-to-day of the legal efforts.”

Summing up the significance of the documents, Georgetown’s Mary McCord said, “This all came out of Wisconsin and expanded to other states. That was a significant part of the narrative that led to the violence on January 6.”



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact