

EXCLUSIVE: State's Largest Business Group Refuses To Endorse Longtime Member Tim Michels For Governor

By Mark Belling, WISN-AM

Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, the state's largest business organization and a major power in Republican politics, has refused a request by Wisconsin governor candidate Tim Michels for the group's endorsement.

Sources tell me that Michels met with WMC officials earlier this month and asked the group to issue a joint endorsement of both him and former Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch. WMC endorsed Kleefisch several months ago, well before Michels entered the race. Many conservative groups issue endorsements of multiple candidates in primaries and that's what Michels was seeking from WMC but didn't get it.

Michels' family-owned business, Michels Corporation, has been a member of WMC for decades as has Tim Michels himself. Essentially, WMC is spurning one of its own business members so it can back Kleefisch. Interesting.

All four GOP candidates for governor: Michels, Kleefisch, Kevin Nicholson and Timothy Ramthun, have tried to portray themselves as outsiders in the race. A number of powerful Republican behind the scenes heavy hitters are backing Michels despite his claims to be an outsider. And, despite Kleefisch's claims she is running against the Madison "swamp," she has the sole endorsement of WMC and the backing of many Republican officials including former Governor Scott Walker.

WMC can run independent expenditure ads touting Kleefisch and the group's refusal to endorse Michels makes it clear that WMC wants Kleefisch and only Kleefisch to be the GOP nominee for governor.

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