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Rep. Sargent: GIB Pulls the Rug Out From Under Trans State Employees

MADISON – Representative Sargent (D-Madison) expressed her disappointment today regarding the Group Insurance Board’s (GIB) decision last night to retreat from its original decision to extend insurance coverage to state employees for gender confirmation surgeries and related services.

“‘Disappointed’ doesn’t even begin to cover it, but I can’t say I’m surprised,” Rep. Sargent commented. “These antics are quintessential of the Walker Administration every time they rob Wisconsin employees of their rights: step one, give minimal public notice; step two, deliberate and decide behind closed doors in the dead of night; step three, put it out with the Friday news dump and hope no one will notice.”

Last night’s GIB decision means insurance coverage for gender confirmation surgeries and related services to start on January 1 as planned, but will remove the benefits if four contingencies are met: a court ruling invalidates HHS’ rule; compliance with state law; renegotiation of contracts that maintain or reduce premium costs for the state; a final opinion from the Department of Justice on whether removal of benefits constitutes a breach of fiduciary duty.

“Regardless of the contingencies in place, this decision only breeds uncertainty and instability for state employees seeking gender confirmation surgeries and related services. The simple fact is the Group Insurance Board pulled the rug out from under trans, queer, and gender non-conforming state employees last night, whose insurance benefits could be taken from them unexpectedly at any time without any explanation,” Rep. Sargent said.

“It’s clear the GOP are going to continue pursuing trans- and queerphobic policies in our State, but I have and will continue to fight to protect the rights of all LGBTQ persons in Wisconsin.”

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