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Wisconsin Assembly Republicans Abandon the Americans with Disabilities Act

Fitchburg – Representative Jimmy Anderson asked his Assembly colleagues to support his request for disability accommodations by signing the attached letter. While every Democratic member of the Assembly signed on, not one Republican offered their support. He released the following statement expressing his frustration and disappointment:

“The Americans with Disabilities Act is a landmark piece of legislation that gave disabled people the right to be included in American life. At its core, the ADA is the recognition that while I may be in a wheelchair, I still deserve dignity and respect. And that is all I’m asking for by requesting these accommodations: for my colleagues to recognize that all reasonable efforts should be made to make it possible for me to participate in the legislative process.

“This isn’t simply a legal mandate, it is a moral one. Whether this law existed or not, I would hope that my colleagues would show me the smallest modicum of consideration given my limitations and support my fight for these very basic accommodations. But none of my Republican colleagues have stepped up to do the right thing.

“Imagine what this says to disabled Wisconsinites. You are telling them that they do not deserve respect. That they do not deserve dignity. That they do not deserve inclusion. You are reaffirming the fear that lives in the heart of every disabled person: that they are defined by the limitations of their disability and undeserving of the opportunity to achieve their dreams. To make those who already face so much adversity feel this way is reprehensible.

“It is safe to say that this has been the low point of my legislative career. My Republican colleagues’ silence in the face of Speaker Vos’ petty actions, whether it is driven by cowardice or malice, is inexcusable. I have often been frustrated by my Republican colleagues, sometimes even dismayed. This is the first time I have been ashamed.”

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