



DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS

JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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Contact: Senator Jon Erpenbach (608) 266-6670
Senator LaTonya Johnson (608) 266-2500
Representative Chris Taylor (608) 266-5342
Representative Evan Goyke (608) 266-0645

JFC Democrats Introduce Legislation to Repeal Lame Duck Laws and Restore Powers to the Attorney General

MADISON, WI - In December 2018, Republicans passed a highly divisive set of laws that were aimed at limiting the power of the newly elected Attorney General and Governor. These lame duck laws were passed in the dead of the night without input from the public.

We have since witnessed the Attorney General and the Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) attempting to navigate the ill thought-out legislation, which has delayed settlements and put hundreds of millions of dollars at risk. After spending unlimited taxpayer dollars attempting to defend their desperate power grab, the Republicans are now squandering more taxpayer dollars on private attorneys to figure out how to abide by their own unworkable laws.

JFC Democrats are introducing legislation to fix the problem that Republicans created, by repealing the changes made to the powers of the Attorney General and restores the powers exercised by Republican and Democratic Attorneys General throughout our state's history.

The Democratic members of the JFC released the following statements:

“Wisconsin trusts the Attorney General to do his job, but Republicans continue to stand in his way,” said Senator Erpenbach. “Republicans desperately passed lame duck laws in the dead of night that they aren’t able to live up to and now they are postponing settlements and putting hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars at risk. Wisconsin deserves better.”

“After yesterday’s aborted JFC hearing, it should be abundantly clear to Wisconsinites that Republicans did an incredibly sloppy job in their rush to pass the lame duck laws last year,” said Senator Johnson. “Instead of Wisconsin’s duly elected Attorney General being able to act in our state’s best interests, we have legal gridlock and the legislative Republicans have no one to blame but themselves. They took unprecedented action to strip powers from Governor Evers and AG Kaul and are just now realizing they’ve made a mess of our state’s government.”

“Last week, we saw firsthand the dysfunction caused by these reckless, ill-conceived and unworkable laws,” said Representative Taylor. “The answer to the chaos caused by this unprecedented power grab is to repeal their constraints on the Attorney General and let him do his job and settle cases without legislative interference. The simplest way to resolve this issue is to pass this bill and restore the Attorney General’s basic powers.”

“The last two weeks have shown that the lame duck laws cannot be fixed,” said Representative Goyke. “The settlement process contained in 2017 Act 369 doesn’t work and Republican efforts to spend money on private attorneys has done nothing to fix their own flawed legislation. The only solution is to return the settlement authority to the Attorney General and allow him to settle cases on behalf of Wisconsin, as Attorneys General from both parties have had the power to do.”

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