



CHRIS TAYLOR

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ♦ 76th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

December 12, 2018

*Via Hand-Delivery*

Governor Scott Walker  
Office of the Governor  
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Governor Walker,

I am writing to you to urge you to veto the lame duck extraordinary session bills – SB 883, SB 884, and SB 886. These bills went against the will of the people and the ballots they cast on November 6<sup>th</sup>. The people of Wisconsin spoke loudly and clearly: They want a government that works together and focuses on their priorities, including increasing access to affordable, quality health care, sustainably funding our public education system, and finally solving the transportation funding crisis. These bills will not only tie the hands of Governor-Elect Evers and Attorney General-Elect Kaul, but they will tie the hands of state agencies and prevent the crucial work that needs to be done for the people of our state. I urge you to prioritize the will of the people as you leave office and veto these unprecedented bills that undermine the foundation of our government.

The legislation passed during the lame duck extraordinary session not only violates the will of the people, but was rammed through the legislative process in the dark of night and early hours of the morning without adequate time for public review and input. I received the 287 pages of bills at 5:35 pm on Friday, November 30<sup>th</sup> when a notice of public hearing in the Joint Finance Committee was also published for the very next Monday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. We had no Legislative Fiscal Bureau analysis, no Legislative Counsel analysis, and limited Legislative Reference Bureau analysis.

Despite the short deadline, my office received an estimated 400 contacts from individuals across the state denouncing these lame duck bills for what they are: An abuse of power by politicians intended to circumvent the will of the voters.

During the Joint Finance Committee public hearing where I serve, not one legislator appeared to support these bills. But the people did appear – all 1,424 of them, with all but two individuals opposing the bills. Wisconsinites, self-identified Democrats, Republicans and Independents from all over our state, spoke with one unified voice in opposition to this unprecedented abuse of power.

Unfortunately, legislative Republicans again ignored the voice of the people. By late Tuesday evening and into early Wednesday morning, we were debating and voting on these bills, one version of which we didn't even receive until 4:30 am on Wednesday morning. This process is the antithesis of how good policy is made and is an affront to democracy.

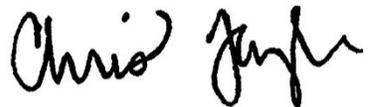
Through these bills, legislative leaders have usurped executive and judicial power and interfered with the accepted role of the Attorney General. For example, you currently have the power to settle or withdraw from lawsuits the state brings, which you have used throughout your tenure. One of these bills, SB 884, denies this same power to Governor-elect Evers. The Attorney General also now has the power to settle cases where the state is a defendant. These bills take these settlement and withdrawal powers and give them to Republican legislators, which will prevent the state from expediently settling lawsuits and give legislators broad authority to derail settlements. Further, allowing Assembly and Senate Republicans and the Joint Committee on Legislative Organization to intervene in any lawsuit they choose interferes with judicial powers.

These bills are also fiscally irresponsible. Speaker Robin Vos and Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald give themselves an unlimited amount of taxpayer money to hire an unlimited number of law firms to wage a legal war against Governor-Elect Evers and Attorney General-Elect Kaul. There was no fiscal estimate regarding how much this is going to cost taxpayers.

These bills violate the separation of powers that our democracy is built on and that our founding fathers expect of us. Speaker Vos received 16,775 votes. Majority Leader Fitzgerald received 49,051 votes. Governor-Elect Evers and Attorney General-Elect Kaul both received over 1.3 million votes. The rules shouldn't change depending on what party wins elections, but that is exactly what these bills do.

As the late President George H.W. Bush acknowledged, the success of a Governor is the success of our state. You have the power to avoid a legacy of petty sabotage. Please respect the peaceful transition of power that has long been an expectation set forth by great leaders and which you yourself benefitted from as governor-elect. I am urging you to put the people of Wisconsin above politics, and to veto these harmful bills.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Representative Chris Taylor  
76th Assembly District