



# Jeremy Thiesfeldt

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 52nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Hariah Hutkowski

Phone: 608-266-3156

## Milwaukee and Dane County Clerks Violate State Law

*Clerks Assume Duties of Legislators*

**Madison** – On Friday, May 13, 2016, Dane County Clerk Scott McDonell and Milwaukee County Clerk Joe Czarnecki, acting on county legal advice, declared their intent to immediately begin issuing domestic partnerships to heterosexual couples in direct violation of Wisconsin state law [770.05(5)].

The Domestic Partnership Law was inserted into the 2009 state budget by then-Governor Jim Doyle. It established certain statutory benefits for same-sex couples outside of marriage. The Law’s supporters declared it was necessary because of the 2006 constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage in Wisconsin. In their statements, both county clerks declared the law to be discriminatory, and effectively unenforceable in light of the 2015 United States Supreme Court decision (*Obergefell v. Hodges*) declaring same-sex marriage to be legal throughout the United States.

In 2015, State Representative Jeremy Thiesfeldt (Fond du Lac – 52) attempted to forge a bipartisan agreement and subsequent legislation to dissolve the Domestic Partnership Law. “The Domestic Partnership Law is discriminatory. But it needs to be repealed, not expanded. It stands as a form of ‘marriage-lite,’ encouraging same-sex couples to avoid the commitment of marriage. These clerks are now engaging in social engineering by lawlessly extending this ‘marriage-lite’ option to opposite-sex couples as well,” Rep. Thiesfeldt stated.

Rep. Thiesfeldt also believes that these unlawful actions reveal the true intentions of the original proponents of the Domestic Partnership Law stating, “They have achieved their stated, ultimate goal. It is now time for them to show they sincerely believe in the judicially-redefined institution of marriage, and disavow this unlawful action by Dane and Milwaukee County Clerks. Failure to do so reveals and confirms an agenda that has a larger goal than same-sex marriage, but instead seeks to cheapen and destroy the institution.”

“I also call on Wisconsin Attorney General Brad Schimel to immediately seek a court injunction to end the counties’ extension of this law which is occurring without the benefit of legislative or judicial action. The clerks are correct that the law is discriminatory, but county clerks do not have the power to make laws. The constitution clearly leaves that power to the legislature,” concluded Rep. Thiesfeldt.

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