



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

December 16, 2011

The Honorable Mike Huebsch
Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Administration
P.O. Box 7864
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Secretary Huebsch,

We are writing to ask the Department of Administration (DOA) to enforce the Wisconsin State Facilities Access Policy, effective December 1, 2011. For a number of months now, law abiding groups have been going through the appropriate permitting process to meet at the Capitol, while other groups have consistently ignored those rules – without consequence. By not enforcing the policies of the Capitol, the DOA and the leadership of the Capitol Police are creating a double standard against those groups that are going through all the steps necessary to follow the laws and policies governing our Capitol. This is unacceptable.

While we are pleased to see the Administration making positive steps toward upholding the rule of law, it is imperative that the DOA hold all Capitol visitors to these rules. The circus-like environment created at times by several of these groups is an affront to the dignity of the people of the State of Wisconsin, which the Capitol represents and to whom it belongs. Groups refusing to abide by the rules are not entitled to special “free speech rights” not afforded to other individuals or groups.

This is most certainly a matter of free speech, the democratic process and our republican form of government. As state legislators, we are duly elected officials of our respective constituencies, elected to represent the individual and collective voices of our constituents in the Capitol. While we all agree the Capitol functions as a public forum for debate and free speech, we also recognize that this building is a place of business – the people’s business. Constant audible disruptions at all hours of the working day both inside and outside the Capitol are an impediment to us as legislators conducting affairs on behalf of our constituents. Further, the intimidation tactics employed by several of these groups, not only on legislators, but on our constituents and even school groups is unacceptable. Our constituents should not be dissuaded from visiting their Capitol over the lunch hour – every day – knowing that they will not have an opportunity to visit our great rotunda without the loud bellowing of unpermitted demonstrators. These practices

are not permitted at the U.S. Capitol or the U.S. Supreme Court and should not be permitted here.

Every group must be held to the same standard and required to respect the rule of law in order to uphold the safety of Capitol visitors, constituents, staff and members of the legislature.

We all agree, most adamantly, that the constitutional right to political speech should be one of the most protected forms of speech. However, no one opinion takes precedence over another and the liberties of all who visit the Capitol must be respected. The Wisconsin State Facilities Access Policy not only enables and protects a forum for free speech but includes a very lenient “spontaneous event” policy that goes even further to ensure that political speech is protected. We salute the Administration for finally addressing this issue and we look forward to the policy’s uniform and robust enforcement.

Sincerely,

Representative David Craig
83rd Assembly District

Representative André Jacque
2nd Assembly District

Representative Stephen Nass
31st Assembly District

Representative Tyler August
32nd Assembly District

Representative Evan Wynn
43rd Assembly District

Representative Duey Stroebel
60th Assembly District

Representative Jeremy Thiesfeldt
52nd Assembly District

Representative Steve Kestell
27th Assembly District

Representative Paul Farrow
98th Assembly District

Representative Alvin Ott
3rd Assembly District

Representative Chris Kapenga
33rd Assembly District

Representative Kevin Petersen
40th Assembly District

Representative Scott Krug
72nd Assembly District

Representative Joe Knilans
44th Assembly District

Representative Pat Strachota
58th Assembly District

Representative Garey Bies
1st Assembly District