



DAVID CRAIG

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

September 21, 2012

The Honorable Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson, and
Associate Justices of the Supreme Court
16 East State Capitol
Madison, WI 53701

Dear Madam Chief Justice and Associate Justices,

As you are aware, the State of Wisconsin has a great heritage of open government standards, particularly for those who hold elective office. This Court, in fact, has stood numerous times in favor of open government so that our state's residents might have transparent access to the actions of their government. It is my hope that our state institutions would always adhere to these strong standards in all three branches of government.

Unfortunately, the current practices of this court are what lead me to write to you today. The Court's practice of allowing anonymous determinations on which cases are chosen for review flies in the face of Wisconsin's open government tradition. This state's taxpayers rightly demand to know how their elected officials vote, regardless of the perceived importance of the action being taken. And while this Court is not a legislative body, it is an elected body and nonetheless accountable to its citizens and the electorate. As such, the members of this Court owe our state's residents a duty to disclose to our citizenry how they vote on matters, particularly when their actions may have grave consequences for the rights and liberties of the people and our state's republican form of government.

When matters of national importance, such as our state's Voter ID law—which was enacted by a duly elected legislature and Executive—come before this Court for review, they should be treated by this Court with the highest level of transparency. This Court owes the people of our state transparency not only on the positions it takes on cases, but also on how the Court's members vote on granting review or refusing review of cases.

It is imperative that the citizenry of this state have confidence in the actions and decisions of its Supreme Court. Proceedings in which justices can conceal their vote on acceptance or rejection of cases for review does not inspire confidence in the highest court of this great state. Particularly in matters of great importance such as our election system, the Court must meet a heightened level of transparency.

I appreciate your consideration of my concerns.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Craig", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Representative David Craig
83rd Assembly District