**Beware of a Republican Supermajority**

By Senator Melissa Agard

Wisconsin is a purple state.

Donald Trump won here in 2016 by just under 23,000 votes. In 2020, Joe Biden defeated Trump by just over 20,000 votes. Senator Ron Johnson and Senator Tammy Baldwin could not be further apart ideologically, but both have been elected multiple times statewide.

There is, however, an outlier in this story of Wisconsin being a state equally divided amongst Democrats and Republicans - the State Legislature. Despite the razor-thin margins we’ve seen in statewide races, the legislature continues to be heavily tilted toward Republicans. As recently as 2018, we saw Democrats winning the statewide popular vote in all Assembly races 53% to 45%, yet the Assembly Democrats gained only one seat, and Republicans retained a 63-36 advantage. Folks, this is not what democracy looks like.

Now I could tell you all about gerrymandering and the negative impact it has had on our elections and our state, but you’re likely already aware of our rigged maps. Instead, I want to highlight an even more immediate threat before us that you may not have heard about - Republicans attempting to gain a supermajority (two-thirds) in both houses of the legislature.

If Republicans gain just one seat in the Senate and five seats in the Assembly, they would have the ability to override the veto of any governor. In our system of checks and balances, this possibility of unilateral control by the extreme GOP majority should scare every Wisconsinite.

With no check on their power in the governor’s office, Republicans could pursue an agenda that is far out of line with the people of our state. During the last legislative session, Governor Evers was able to veto 126 bills that did not line up with our Wisconsin values. He thankfully vetoed bills that would have harmed our free and fair elections by making it more difficult to obtain an absentee ballot, more difficult for residents of care facilities to vote, and more difficult for voters with disabilities and those who are indefinitely confined to return their ballots.

He also vetoed bills that would have made our state far less safe including legislation that would permit individuals to carry loaded guns in their vehicles on school grounds and permit individuals to carry guns at a place of worship on a private school campus. Evers also blocked a bill that would allow concealed carry permits from other states even if that individual has not passed a criminal background check in that state, as required for Wisconsinites.

Let me be clear, with a legislative supermajority Republicans would make sure all of these bills would become the law of the land. Simply put, the larger the Republican majority grows, the less accountable to the people they will become. That is bad for policy making and bad for the health of our democracy.

Legislative Democrats will continue to side with Governor Evers and the people of our state who reject these extreme policies. In our system of government, every branch matters. We cannot ignore these very real Republican efforts to gain a supermajority and the sole power to determine what bills become law and full control over our state budget.

You don’t have to take my word for it, Republicans are openly talking about pursuing the radical legislation that has been blocked up to this point. Speaker Robin Vos recently promised that in 2023, the State Legislature would reconsider each of the vetoed bills from this past session. With a two-thirds majority in each house, they would have fewer obstacles in their way.

I will continue working tirelessly to spread our Democratic message of fairness, opportunity, and community to ensure that we do not have to endure the unchecked agenda that a Republican supermajority would bring to Wisconsin.