



Civil Service and Making Way for More Cronyism

Creeping under the radar during the Corrupt Politician Protection Act mess, the Republican-led legislature quietly pushed through another offensive attack on our state.

In June 1905 Wisconsin's first civil service law was enacted and for over 100 years since, the state of Wisconsin has used the merit principle for employee selection. The system has evolved over the past century and reflects the fairness and integrity of our state. About 30,000 current state employees completed one or more experience-based exams and were hired based upon unbiased test scores. Employees can only be terminated for just cause and there are protections for senior employees.

The civil service "reform" bill will change the system so that all hiring is based off of resumes. This allows people to be weeded out of selection for any number of illegal biases that can be formed from resume histories such as political affiliation or race. There is no paper trail to justify why any decision was made. Currently, it is easy to see who scored higher on an experience-based exam and thus understand why someone was or was not selected.

It is especially concerning that this attack on our civil service system opens the door for corruption and cronyism during an Administration endemic with scandals and charges of unethical conduct. Removing objectivity means that we will have more examples of Walker Administration cronyism like Brian Deschane, the son of a major lobbyist. Despite his two drunk driving convictions and having no college degree, Brian was appointed to two top state jobs, one of which paid \$81,500 per year. Similar changes were made at the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and that agency has been rife with scandal and repeatedly has put taxpayer funds at risk.

This bill has also passed the Assembly and awaits scheduling in the Senate.