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Rep. Ryan Clancy Applauds Successful Public Effort to Stop Anti-Protest Bill

MADISON, Wis. – Today, the Republican leadership of the Wisconsin Assembly’s Committee on Judiciary released the full agenda for tomorrow’s executive session, notably dropping AB 88 from consideration. AB 88, described by bill author Rep. Shae Sortwell as an “anti-riot” bill, is clearly intended to discourage free expression and assembly. It would, among other consequences, criminalize a person’s presence at a gathering of three or more people where certain acts are committed, even if by other attendees, and subject them to 3.5 years in jail and a \$10,000 fine.

Critics pointed out that the language of AB 88 is broad and vague enough to criminalize events ranging from participating in a food fight to attending a protest where another participant picks a flower or threatens to throw an object.

Rep. Ryan Clancy (D-19) issued the following statement:

“While myself and many of my Democratic colleagues are tired of wasting our time and our constituents’ resources on badly written, unconstitutional bills like AB 88, I’m ecstatic that Republicans have abandoned this one for now. It’s clear that passionate, thoughtful testimony from the public, free speech advocates and civil rights experts –along with excellent technical critiques from Rep. Andrew Hysell – has stopped this so-called “anti-riot” bill dead in its tracks.

In reality, however, this isn’t an “anti-riot” bill: it’s a threat to free speech, expression and assembly disguised as a public safety measure. Thankfully, it’s now unlikely to move forward this session.

This is not the first time this session that our community has publicly shamed a committee chair into dropping a bill prior to a vote; it happened just last month with an attack on Medicaid. This pushback would not be necessary if Judiciary Chair Ron Tusler and his colleagues in the majority spent less time trying to dismantle our rights and getting angry at rude hats and any time at all addressing the actual needs of Wisconsin residents. Until that changes, we all must remain vigilant to fight back their next, terrible idea.”

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19TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT