



WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

**Deb Andraca**

23RD ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

BAYSIDE FOX POINT GRAFTON MEQUON THIENSVILLE WHITEFISH BAY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**April 13, 2022**

**Contact: Rep. Deb Andraca**  
**608-266-0486**

**Joint Finance Committee Meets, Refuses to Discuss Knowles-Nelson Grants  
Republicans Demand Transparency While Hiding Behind “Anonymous Objections”**

Madison, Wis. – Republicans refuse to hold the most powerful legislative committee to the same standards of transparency that they demand of our school boards and local election clerks. Today the Joint Finance Committee met in Madison but their agenda did not include any of the six Knowles-Nelson stewardship grants that have been held up by “anonymous objections.” This despite the Committee being required to hold hearings on these proposals by state law (Wisconsin Statute 23.0917(6m)(a)).

The committee’s objection letter states, “An objection has been raised to this request and a meeting of the Joint Committee on Finance will be scheduled. Therefore, the request is not approved at this time.” No hearings have been scheduled, and no committee members have come forth to explain the reason for the objections.

“There will be objections to projects, that’s why the legislature holds public hearings,” said Representative Deb Andraca (D-Whitefish Bay). “The robust exchange of ideas is a hallmark of our democracy. But denying a request that is overwhelmingly supported by local elected officials and our constituents, without any public input or discussion, is an insult to everyone who believes in our democratic process.”

The committee co-chairs, Senator Howard Marklein and Representative Mark Born, have received letters urging them to take up the stalled grants from DNR Secretary Cole, Democratic members of the committee, Representative Andraca, and hundreds of constituents and conservationists from around the state. Some of the Knowles-Nelson objections have been waiting in committee for more than two years without the hearing required by statute.



STATE CAPITOL P.O. Box 8952, Madison, WI 53708 TELEPHONE (608) 266-0486 TOLL FREE (888) 534-0023  
EMAIL [rep.andraca@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:rep.andraca@legis.wisconsin.gov) WEBSITE <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/23/andraca>  
FACEBOOK @RepAndraca TWITTER @RepAndraca



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“We hear so many Republicans demanding more government transparency lately – well, what’s good enough for our local school boards and election clerks should be good enough for the Senators and Representatives in charge of spending our tax dollars,” said Andraca. “Apparently for Republicans on the Joint Finance Committee, transparency is a one-way mirror.”

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STATE CAPITOL P.O. Box 8952, Madison, WI 53708 TELEPHONE (608) 266-0486 TOLL FREE (888) 534-0023  
EMAIL [rep.andraca@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:rep.andraca@legis.wisconsin.gov) WEBSITE <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/23/andraca>  
FACEBOOK @RepAndraca TWITTER @RepAndraca