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Governor Evers Vetoes Common Sense Graffiti Bill

Bill would have protected monuments that honor Wisconsin's historical legacy

Madison, WI. Rep. William Penterman (R-Columbus) released the following statement on Governor Evers' veto of [Assembly Bill 776](#), relating to damage or graffiti to certain historical property and providing a penalty.

"It is unfortunate the Governor does not agree that damage to public property should be punished," said Rep. Penterman. "I believe it is better to build up rather than tear down and destroy. Monuments on public property honor the individuals who advanced liberty for Wisconsin and our country. We should honor their legacy, not vandalize their monuments."

Under current law, it is a Class I felony to damage or graffiti certain vehicles, highways, common carrier property, grand juror property, and state-owned historical property. Assembly Bill 776 makes it a Class I felony to damage or graffiti any structure, plaque, statue, painting, or other monument of commemorative or historical significance that is on public property or is maintained by the state, county or municipality.

During the 2020 riots in Madison, several historical monuments around the State Capitol, including Lady Forward and Civil War hero Colonel Hans Heg were destroyed. Lady Forward is a symbol of our state and Hans Heg was a greatly respected abolitionist. Those statutes are more than just stone and metal – they represent the valor of Wisconsinites. They have since been restored, at the expense of the Wisconsin taxpayers. However they should never have been damaged. There should not be a license to destroy public property and to cause damage through civil unrest.

According to the Wisconsin Professional Police Association's 2021 statewide survey, 87% of the public agrees there should be stronger penalties for people who destroy property during protests.

This proposal was a simple extension of penalties already in place, and would help ensure historical property remains intact for all to enjoy.

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