



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
GARY HEBL
46TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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REP. HEBL DENOUNCES IRRESPONSIBLE GAB OVERHAUL PROPOSAL

(MADISON) – Rep. Gary Hebl (D-Sun Prairie) today criticized a proposal to eliminate Wisconsin’s nonpartisan political watchdog, the Government Accountability Board.

The bill would eliminate the GAB’s current makeup of nonpartisan, retired judges and create two commissions, each led by boards appointed by the governor and legislators.

Hebl recently joined Assembly Democratic colleagues in admonishing a potential GAB overhaul and several other drastic changes to government oversight in Wisconsin.

“Assembly Republican leadership’s plan to dismantle the GAB in favor of politicized elections and ethics commissions is the first in a number of proposals that will weaken government oversight,” Hebl said. “Considered along with other GOP proposals that weaken Wisconsin’s open records laws, shield politicians from John Doe corruption probes, and eliminate the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau, this effort to inject partisanship into the GAB shows a contempt for transparent, clean government.”

Hebl said the bill’s supporters showed their true intent through a provision that specifically fires the current GAB director.

“Republican leaders have called for Kevin Kennedy’s head because they haven’t agreed with the GAB’s decisions on every issue,” Hebl said. “Instead of honoring an independent, nonpartisan agency’s decisions, Republican leaders instead decide to change the rules.”

Currently, the GAB director serves at the pleasure of the majority of the board. Five of the six board members have been appointed by Governor Walker. The other board member’s term expired earlier this year, but Gov. Walker has not nominated a new appointee.

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“The board’s panel of retired judges already has the ability to fire the GAB director,” Hebl said. “We don’t need the legislature imposing itself into an independent agency’s actions for political reasons. Put simply, the current Republican majority is too consumed with maintaining its absolute control of the governor’s office, the legislature, and the judicial branch.”

Hebl said that nobody could better characterize the GOP’s hunger for absolute power than the bill’s author, Rep. Dean Knudson (R-Hudson), who offered the following statement while recently criticizing the GAB:

The very definition of tyranny is when you've got legislative, executive and judicial power all in one, and that's exactly what happens with the GAB. They make their own rules; they enforce those rules, and they serve as the judge.

“Rep. Knudson must have missed the irony in his statement,” Hebl said. “I think it’s time for supporters of this bill to look inward and realize that the majority’s laser focus on maintaining absolute control of Wisconsin government is leading to a failure to serve the people of Wisconsin.”

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