



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

November 17, 2015

Governor Scott Walker
Room 115 East
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702
(HAND DELIVERED)

Dear Governor Walker,

We are writing you today to request that you veto Assembly Bill 387 and Assembly Bill 388, two bills that recently passed the Legislature in Extraordinary Session that we believe will have a devastating impact on Wisconsin's tradition of clean, open and transparent government.

The first bill, AB 387, will make dramatic and damaging changes to Wisconsin's campaign finance laws by allowing for more secretive money in political campaigns, enabling more corporate influence over our government and increasing opportunities for political corruption. As noted by the well-respected Brennan Center for Justice, this bill goes far behind its supporters' stated intent of codifying recent court decisions on campaign finance. This is especially true in light of a Senate amendment to the bill that gives special-interest groups the ability to coordinate closely with individual campaigns, something never allowed before in Wisconsin. As the Brennan Center also recently argued, AB 387 would transform "... Wisconsin's political system from one of the most open and transparent in the nation to one of the least."

The second bill, AB 388, would eliminate our nonpartisan elections and ethics watchdog, the Government Accountability Board (GAB). In the wake of the caucus scandal – the darkest period in Wisconsin's legislative history – Republicans and Democrats came together and created the GAB with near-unanimous, bipartisan support. The GAB is considered by many to be a national model for the fair, independent administration of elections. Returning to the failed partisan model that led to the caucus scandal would take Wisconsin in the wrong direction.

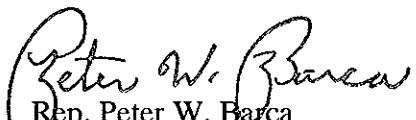
Two provisions contained in AB 388 should make you especially wary. The first would give partisan legislators the ability to quash investigations by requiring investigators to gain approval from the Joint Finance Committee if the cost of the investigation exceeds \$25,000. The second requires that, if the new elections and ethics commissions do not choose their own administrators within 45 days, the Joint Committee on Legislative Organization – currently controlled by Republicans – would choose for them. This is the exact opposite of what the bill's authors and supporters had promised – new, fully bipartisan commissions.

When we travel around our districts and around the state to meet with our citizens, *not one* has ever told us they want us to focus our attention on giving special interests a greater influence


over our government or that we should have partisan control over our election process. The people of Wisconsin would much rather we focus on urgent issues that will improve their everyday lives, such as working to create jobs, growing our economy, investing in infrastructure or supporting our public schools. These are concerns that we are sure our citizens have shared with you and your office, as well.


Thank you for considering our request to veto these bills. At the very least, if you truly believe these are worthy bills and intend to sign them into law, we strongly urge you to do so in full view of the public and the press so that the people of Wisconsin can fully appreciate the gravity of these changes and how they will do serious harm to clean, open and transparent government in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,


Rep. Peter W. Barca
Assembly Democratic Leader


Rep. Katrina Shankland
Assistant Democratic Leader


Rep. Andy Jorgensen
Democratic Caucus Chair


Rep. JoCasta Zamarripa
Democratic Caucus Vice Chair

Rep. Mandela Barnes
Rep. Terese Berceau
Rep. Jill Billings
Rep. David Bowen
Rep. Jonathan Brostoff
Rep. Dave Considine
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Rep. Steve Doyle
Rep. Eric Genrich
Rep. Evan Goyke
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Rep. Gordon Hintz
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Rep. Fred Kessler
Rep. Debra Kolste
Rep. Cory Mason
Rep. Beth Meyers
Rep. Nick Milroy
Rep. Tod Ohnstad
Rep. SONDY POPE

Rep. Daniel Riemer
Rep. Melissa Sargent
Rep. Christine Sinicki
Rep. Mark Spreitzer
Rep. Amanda Stuck
Rep. Lisa Subeck
Rep. Chris Taylor
Rep. Dana Wachs
Rep. Leon Young
Rep. Josh Zepnick