



# NANCY VANDERMEER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 70<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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## **Statement on Madison Vandals Tearing Down Statues at State Capitol Building**

**Tomah, WI** – Representative Nancy VanderMeer (R-Tomah) released the following statement in response to news that Madison vandals tore down statues at the State Capitol Building in Madison Tuesday evening:

"It's unconscionable that Governor Evers, a Madison resident, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi, and Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway continue to condone, facilitate, and allow lawlessness in our state's capitol and at the State Capitol Building. These vandals are criminals engaging in criminal acts, but one would hope that at some point, either the Governor, the County Executive, or the Mayor themselves or someone on their staff would develop enough of a consciousness or awareness of how vile this behavior is to at least try to put a stop to it.

"The right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress is a right that is appropriately enshrined in Constitution as the first amendment in the Bill of Rights. However, there is not a right to remove, destroy and vandalize public statutes, memorials, or private property. Early this month, a number of legislators [wrote Governor Evers](#) in response to vandalism on the Capitol ground including statutes, calling on him to, '...ensure that people have a house free from vandalism and the effects of rioting, a house to visit and conduct business upon its re-opening.' The letter continued, stating, as governor, he has 'the authority to mobilize plans and people, taking the necessary steps to ensure this does not continue, beginning immediately.' There was no response received to the letter.

"If we thought that the irony of what we've seen on the national level in big cities across the country over the past few weeks could be surmounted, [the "Forward" statute was completed by a woman named Jean Pond Miner in 1893](#). She was born in Menasha, WI, and grew up in Madison, WI. At the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, fulfilling a commission to create art representative of her native state, she created the statue. "Forward" is an allegory of devotion and progress, qualities Miner felt Wisconsin embodied. Reflecting Wisconsin's continuous drive to be a national leader, the state adopted "Forward" as the official state motto in 1851. Additionally, [Hans Christian Heg was a Norwegian immigrant and Union Colonel and anti-slavery advocate that died fighting the Confederate Army at the Battle of Chickamauga in 1863](#). He was a former Free Soil Party member. The Free Soil Party was a short lived coalition political party largely focused on the single issue of opposing the expansion of slavery that eventually merged into the Republican Party.

"The State Capitol is the people's house and it belongs to all of the citizens of our great state. Governor Evers is responsible for the protection and preservation of our State Capitol grounds and furthermore, is responsible for the safety of those that conduct the people's business there. Our governor should explain to the people of Wisconsin the justification for not protecting our statehouse and statehouse grounds in addition to his justification for exposing individuals conducting state business to extreme safety risks."

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*The 70th Assembly District includes portions of Monroe, Jackson, Portage and Wood counties*