



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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## **Joint Press Release from Representatives Bare, Hong, and Cruz on Republicans' Requests to Local Governments About Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Today, Democratic members of the Wisconsin State Assembly's Government Operations, Accountability, and Transparency Committee sent the attached letter to Republican Chair Amanda Nedweski (R-Pleasant Prairie) after learning that a member of the Committee, State Representative Shae Sortwell (R-Two Rivers), had sent requests to local governments for information on their work aligned with diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The letter states these requests were "procedurally deficient and invalid" because they were done without the knowledge of all Committee members, formulated behind closed doors, improperly addressed, and gave no guidance for compliance with the request other than a deadline.

State Representative Mike Bare (D-Verona), the ranking Democratic member of the Committee, said: "Representative Sortwell's requests don't fit the Committee's goal of accountability and transparency. He's purporting to speak on behalf of colleagues, and abusing a statute to coerce action from local governments in mainly Democratic parts of the state. This Committee should work in a bipartisan way to achieve accountable and transparent results in government. Otherwise, this will be nothing more than a DOGE wannabe creating chaos and confusion with no discernible policy goal. Our local governments need more resources and support, not micromanagement by one Committee or member of the Legislature."

State Representative Francesca Hong (D-Madison) stated: "It's disappointing, though not surprising, that Rep. Sortwell is pushing for a sham investigation instead of focusing on the real needs of our local governments. I urge the vice chair and chair of the GOAT Committee to first clarify the committee's purpose and assess any overlap with existing committees—rather than using their position to intimidate local municipalities with authority they don't actually have."

State Representative Angelina Cruz (D-Racine) said: "The actions taken by Representative Sortwell are a clear overreach and show a lack of respect for the local governments that serve our communities. Rather than focusing on divisive tactics, we should be working together to support our municipalities and ensure they have the tools they need to serve all residents. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are critical to building stronger, more inclusive communities, but these requests undermine meaningful dialogue and collaboration. We must prioritize unity and constructive action over political gamesmanship."

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