


BARBARA DITTRICH

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 99th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

For Immediate Release
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Rep. Dittrich Excluded From “Inclusive” Oconomowoc Parade

Madison – Representative Barbara Dittrich (R – *Oconomowoc*) issued the following in response to constituents upset about the Oconomowoc Rotary’s elimination of State and Federal elected officials from Oconomowoc’s annual 4th of July parade:

“My Beloved Oconomowoc,

I am writing to you because I have had several upset constituents as well as numerous media reach out to me regarding Oconomowoc’s annual 4th of July parade, which I have participated in since 2018. I LOVE greeting my neighbors, friends, fellow church members, and other attendees as I walk down the street celebrating America’s birthday with you. Those who have watched over the years me know that I too often get delayed by handing out hugs nearly as much as my team hands out candy. I have always made the Oconomowoc parade a priority, recruiting volunteers and spending hundreds of dollars on treats and other hand-outs.

Sadly, you will not be seeing me in this year’s 4th of July parade, and it is not by choice. The Oconomowoc Rotary Club, which my dear father-in-law was once a faithful member of, has made a deliberate decision to exclude me and other elected state and federal officials from the parade. I have always had a wonderful relationship with the Rotary and was shocked when they refunded my entry fee and told me that I was not welcome. My husband, who has lived and worked in this city for nearly all of his life was even sent on a business exchange to Germany by the Rotary, so you can imagine how taken aback and offensive I found this exclusion.

Our family has been an integral part of this city for decades. We were small business owners and served on the Oconomowoc Area Chamber of Commerce, humbly doing the clean-up after most people had gone home from numerous street dances. We fed local people out of our own deep freeze with free groceries when my husband worked as a food broker. I began a ministry for parents of children with chronic illnesses, special needs, and disabilities in this city, which I ran for sixteen years and expanded nationally. We helped build out the Imagination Station as it was launched. My husband and our three children all graduated from Oconomowoc High School. We pay taxes and live in this city. And I have been greatly humbled that this city has sent me to represent and fight for it in our state government for four legislative sessions.

Since I was first chosen to represent you in 2018, I have made it my duty to be responsive to every constituent, no matter what their political position; You may not like the answer you get, but I will always work with people to the best of my ability, across ever level of government and across party lines. One of the greatest compliments I receive from constituents is when they state, ‘I don’t share your political views, but I vote for you because you take care of me as a citizen.’ Walking in the Oconomowoc parade is not political; It continues my personal ethos of service, greeting all of the wonderful people I serve, no matter who they are or what their personal beliefs.

I must state that the Oconomowoc Rotary’s public statement on social media is bewildering. I have never attempted to be “inclusive” by excluding people! Furthermore, America’s Independence Day came about by fighting for our freedoms of speech and association, liberty, and the sense that all are created equal. The message being sent here by the club is the complete antithesis of that unified purpose. Additionally, the Dittrich family is a dedicated, ingrained part of Oconomowoc’s rich history, dating back to the 1950’s, a third or more of the 150 years being celebrated within this parade.

It is neither joyful nor inclusive for my family to be treated this way in our cherished hometown. All of the dedication, service, and devotion to our small city charm has been devalued and demeaned in one simple act. As stated, I have had many upset constituents reach out to me, insisting that this must be reversed or that they will not attend this event. I am sad that I haven’t been welcomed to Oconomowoc’s landmark celebration parade this year. However, you may see me in the communities of Hartland and Stone Bank, whom have warmly continued to welcome me.

If the Oconomowoc Rotary, which includes our mayor and at least one common council member, want to truly heal the division and create a welcoming celebratory event, this decision will be reversed.

Humbly,



State Representative
99th Assembly District”

CONSTITUENTS MAY CONTACT THE REPRESENTATIVE’S OFFICE PRIOR TO JULY 31ST FOR A FREE POCKET DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND US CONSTITUTION IN HONOR OF THIS YEAR’S INDEPENDENCE DAY!

State Representative Barbara Dittrich (R- Oconomowoc) is in her fourth term in the Wisconsin State Assembly, now serving the 99th Assembly District which includes much of Waukesha County’s Lake Country Area as well as portions of Jefferson and Dodge Counties. Representative Dittrich serves as Chair of the Assembly Committee on Insurance.

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