



## My blatant support for all

I want to be very intentional, and very blatant, about my beliefs. I believe in tolerance; I believe in being inclusive. I believe people should be themselves, rather than being forced or shamed into hiding their true identity out of fear.

I believe elected officials are chosen by the people to work on the real issues Wisconsin needs us to solve: issues like underfunded public education and the need for family-supporting jobs.

Unlike Rep. Jesse Kremer, I believe that those of us with the sacred responsibility of representing our state should take that responsibility seriously, and not fall victim to the easy lure of divisive rhetoric and worrying about where people go to the bathroom. I'm not alone in this belief: the leading presidential candidates from both political parties find discrimination based on which bathroom people use to be wrong.

I believe elected officials should also avoid the arrogance, however tempting or politically advantageous in our districts, of assuming that we should decide the legitimacy of someone else's identity. Elected officials like Rep. Kremer should stop using resentful innuendo and disparaging statements such as "a guy who *thinks* he's a woman." It's time to acknowledge the truth: transgender women are women; transgender girls are girls; transgender men are men; and transgender boys are boys.

I believe lawmakers like Rep. Kremer and myself should know the law and speak the truth. We should not try to lump together true predators and those with whom we are simply unfamiliar. It is false and misleading to claim that anyone, regardless of gender identity or location, may indecently expose themselves or behave lewdly without violating the law. Indecent exposure, sexual harassment, and sexual assault have been, are now, and will continue to be illegal. Wisconsin has many laws addressing these crimes.

Anyone who thinks crimes against children are either a new phenomenon, or one that goes unpunished need only look to today's sentencing of former United States Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert. Hastert sexually abused innocent children more than 30 years ago, and he has now been brought to justice and will pay the price for his vile crimes.

Finally, let me throw off any perceived veil of secrecy: I condemn public statements and positions that would seek to marginalize vulnerable groups. I condemn public officials who would blame innocent groups of people out of ill-disguised anger at a modern society that has passed him or her by.

I believe everyone should feel safe no matter where they are and no matter who they are. 41% of transgender people attempt suicide and 50% experience sexual violence in their lifetime. It's time we let go of bigotry and fear of the transgender community. I believe it's time for us to get to work making Wisconsin a better place for everyone.

### 45<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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