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A Better Future for Wisconsin Families is on the Line

It should be common sense to approve a highly qualified nominee who has stepped forward to serve the people of Wisconsin.

This week, Senate Republicans chose to reject Public Service Commissioner Tyler Huebner's confirmation. Despite being a highly qualified, national leader in clean energy, he was rejected.

I understand the devastating personal impact this has on Tyler and the destructive ramifications it has on governing in Wisconsin.

I've walked in his shoes. Five years ago, I was asked to serve the people of Wisconsin as Secretary-designee of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. I heard what our family farmers and rural residents were looking for from the Department of Agriculture.

And when I shared the thoughts and concerns of Wisconsin farmers, I was swiftly rejected by the Wisconsin State Senate. Much like Tyler, I was rejected for doing the job I was asked to do.

Let's be clear what this is really about. This rejection of Tyler Huebner is not just personal, it is an attack on clean energy. It's an attack on our economy. It's an attack on our overall democratic process.

Voters are sick and tired of partisan political games, yet here we are again, discussing another rejected gubernatorial appointment.

I've asked my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. What is the end goal? What do we hope to accomplish by continuing to reject highly qualified appointees who have been brought forward? Is it to create chaos? Is it to build a form of distrust between one another? Is it an attempt to cripple government?

Pendulums do swing. There may come a day in which we have a Republican governor and a Democratic majority in the State Senate. Is this the precedent they want to establish?

Voters are sick of rigid partisan ideology. They're tired of this partisan thinking that stymies progress in our state.

It sends a message that the government is broken and does not work for the people of Wisconsin.

This breakdown in governance hurts all of us. This week, it hurt the progress we have been making toward our future economy, an economy built on clean energy jobs right here in Wisconsin. But who knows what it will impact tomorrow?

While political games are being played with appointments, the needs of the people who sent us to the State Capitol in Madison go unmet. Working families in Wisconsin are facing a child care crisis. For some families in

Wisconsin, child care costs rival the cost of in-state tuition at UW-Madison, while others have no options for child care at all. This is just one of many issues we need to address for working families.

But those conversations aren't happening at the State Capitol. We're having a conversation about rejecting a Public Service Commissioner, because he has the audacity to speak up about how we can produce more clean energy domestically, right here in Wisconsin.

I believe that we can overcome these political attacks on our democratic system and the barriers to progress in our state, because I believe in the power of democracy.

Our work should provide Wisconsinites with hope, rather than fear. We should be able to have conversations about the issues Wisconsinites face, but instead, we're having conversations about political retaliation.

Unfortunately, the decision made this week sends a signal that it doesn't matter what your background is. It sends a signal that your qualifications, hard work, and expertise in the energy field don't matter. What matters is the political party and who appointed you.

I believe there is more that unites us, as a people, than divides us. We may come from different backgrounds. We may approach issues in different ways. But I still believe all of us love the state of Wisconsin, and we want this state to move forward.

We can do better. I hope we do better, because our environment is on the line, clean energy jobs are on the line, and a better future for Wisconsin families is on the line.

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Senator Brad Pfaff represents the 32nd Senate District, which includes La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford, and southern Monroe County.