



BRAD PFAFF
STATE SENATOR

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Representing the Will of the People

Wisconsin has a proud history of open and transparent government dating back to its founding. Our state has seen radical changes in political leadership, from the Progressive era of the early 20th century to the intense debates over policy since 2010. One thing that has been constant throughout these changes is the peaceful transfer of power when the people of our state vote for new voices and leadership in Madison. That is, it has been a constant until recently.

Every governor has appointed experienced, hardworking Wisconsinites from all parts of our state to serve in important roles in our state government. These people oversee our technical colleges, licensing boards, universities, and our natural resources, just to name a few. Importantly, these people also serve for a specific, limited term so that no single governor of our state can dominate public policy long after leaving office.

Recently, our state Supreme Court ruled that a member of the Natural Resources Board appointed by our previous governor could continue serving even though his term has long expired and a qualified replacement has been named. The state Senate refuses to confirm the new member for one simple reason - pure partisan politics. The inaction by the state Senate and the short-sighted decision by our state Supreme Court is a direct affront to a very basic tenet of our democracy, which is that there is a peaceful and respectful transfer of power, even-and especially-when you lose.

Citizens of Wisconsin who are called on by our elected leaders to serve should be considered purely on their merits, not based on whether they will do the bidding of big special interests. They should be given the opportunity to serve regardless if they were appointed by a Democratic governor or hold the same views as Republicans in the Legislature.

Over the course of my time in public service, I have won elections and I have lost elections. Each time, no matter the result, I accepted them as the will of the people. It is what the people of the Driftless Region expect from their elected officials. The decision by the state Supreme Court to allow a member of the Natural Resources Board to remain well after his term expired over a year ago continues to highlight the erosion of democratic institutions in our state. It goes against what the people of our state expect from our elected leaders and severely limits the impact of the people's vote.

This decision by the state Supreme Court undermines our democratic ideals and the duty of public servants to represent the will of the people that they serve. The erosion of democracy means we are all worse off, and we cannot let that happen.

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