

## Divided, but Not Broken Government

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***Senator-elect Jeff Smith, who will take office January 7th to replace outgoing Democratic Sen. Kathleen Vinehout in the 31st District, shares his goal to help heal the political divisions in Wisconsin state government.***

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Town of Brunswick, WI - As I traversed western Wisconsin last year campaigning to be the new 31st District State Senator, it was clear we've been fortunate to have Kathleen Vinehout serve as our Senator for the last twelve years.

Questions abound what Kathleen will do next. Many hope Senator Vinehout will continue her service in some capacity moving forward, but only time will tell. I join the many heartfelt thank you's for Senator Vinehout's service to Western Wisconsin and wish her the best in whatever venture she chooses to pursue.

Looking forward, we have our work cut out for us. Senate integrity is at an all-time low after the lame-duck session stripped away some of Governor-elect Tony Evers and Attorney General-elect Josh Kaul's authority before they are sworn into office on January 7th.

Be assured that I believe in our democratic system of checks and balances. What took place in

Madison in early December, in the dark of the night, was not about checks and balances. It reflected the pettiness and vindictiveness that's been on display for most of this past decade.

As I talked with countless voters throughout the campaign, health care, education and transportation were the primary issues. Although, with each and every issue, there was an underlying frustration. Voters want us to work together, listen and let local government work.

In my years of working to build a window washing business and serve my community, it has always been my belief that any success depends on building relationships. That's how I will serve in my new role as your State Senator.

Our state and communities need our leaders to get along and work together. It's too important to hold grudges. For this upcoming session, the Majority Party will need to figure out how to work with a governor that is not from the same party. I know that won't always be easy. In fact, only 9 Republicans in the State Assembly (out of 63) have worked with a Democratic governor.

I hope my past experience working in both the Minority and Majority Parties in the State Assembly will help me guide others. I look forward to being a leader who can help heal our divided government.

Who are we if we are not leading as partners, neighbors and family? What purpose do we have if we are not dedicated to making lives better for all? And when will we do better if not right now?

While much may still be written and reported about the divisions in politics, it will be my goal to build those much needed relationships and lead us to a better place. That means I will rely on the best you have to offer in advice, ideas, support and friendship.

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