

Weaponizing Impeachment

Written by Jeff Smith, State Senator District 31
Wednesday, 13 September 2023 09:15 -

<http://newiprgressive.com/images/stories/S5/assembly-wi-robin-vos-s450.jpg>



Republican politicians in Madison are ready once again to ignore the will of the People and impeach duly-elected Justice Protasiewicz to maintain their grip on power.

MADISON - Impeachment proceedings have become commonplace in our country's political landscape nowadays. I think we all can assume the founders of our country knew human nature – they knew people and politicians can be flawed and impeachment was the check they needed to prevent individuals from abusing power. What our founders failed to imagine was the cheap and weaponized way that impeachment would be used to topple democracy and our institution of government.

Early Americans fought so hard to create our democratic republic and furnish it with the kind of protections they thought would best protect the liberty and the voice of the American public. It's unlikely that they envisioned that impeachment could be used to undo the results of fair and free elections.

We are witnessing the denigration of our democracy with talk of impeaching Justice Janet Protasiewicz. It's simple: voters overwhelmingly turned out in April to elect a justice who they believed would reaffirm the right for women to choose to have an abortion. Speaker Robin Vos and Republicans are using impeachment to deny women the ruling they need and deserve.

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Robin Vos understands that both his Party and the Republican agenda are aging rapidly. Conservatives' ability to use tricks and tradecraft to serve their fringe ideologies is fading against the inevitability of the People's will, and so their sleight of hand grows more risky and more desperate.



Removing duly-elected Justice Protasiewicz would be a coup. Justice Protasiewicz was elected by an 11% landslide. As defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, a coup is a "sudden, violent seizure of power from a government." Justice Protasiewicz has only been serving for 1 month and hasn't even taken any action yet – sudden is certainly the case. The violence in this agenda may be a little harder to see, but the January 6th insurrection showed just how far Republicans will go for a political win.



When a political party does not have the People's will on their side, their last resort is to use any and all means to stretch the law. Republicans have determined that their best strategy is to have the Assembly impeach Justice Protasiewicz, then have Senate Republican Leader Devin LeMahieu refuse to hold a hearing. This would leave our Supreme Court in a 3-3 limbo, neutralizing one of the three branches meant to impose checks and balances that protect the People.

Republicans don't care if they break Wisconsin for the rest of us. They would rather burn it all to the ground than relinquish control.

Republicans are finally paying the piper, and now they're running scared to grasp at whatever ephemeral strands of power they can grab. Those who have been defrauding Wisconsin's voters fear that proper oversight will curtail the extrajudicial powers they have accumulated.

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The ball, as always, is in the majority's court. They have the opportunity to run up the score – until they inevitably lose the game when voters show up again next fall.



If Republicans use procedural hijinks to subvert the will of Wisconsin voters for yet another election cycle, Republicans will pay the price at the ballot box again in 2024. Despite what the numbers in the Wisconsin Legislature may tell you, Republicans' agenda is supported by a deep minority of voters.

It's not too late for those elected to represent the People to do so. Now is the time to demonstrate that their priorities align with those of their constituents.

Ball's in their court.

Senator Smith represents District 31 in the Wisconsin State Senate. The 31st Senate District includes all of Buffalo, Pepin and Trempealeau counties and portions of Pierce, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson and St. Croix counties.