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In a move that may further open the door to corruption and cronyism, the Wisconsin Senate on Wednesday approved a bill to modify the State's civil service system that was put in place 110 years ago to keep politics out of hiring public employees.

MADISON - Republicans in the Wisconsin Senate on Wednesday approved a bill overhauling the state's century-old hiring process as they voted 19-14 on party lines for Assembly Bill 373 , which would modify the civil service system put in place 110 years ago to keep politics out of hiring public employees.

With Wednesday's attack on the state's civil service system, Senate Republicans have come full circle on their assault on open, honest government in Wisconsin that includes the rigging of state elections, eliminating the non-partisan oversight of state election and ethics laws, exempting politicians from John Doe investigations of political corruption, and opening the floodgates for secret money to influence our elections and ultimately state policy.



"In gutting the state's more than 100 year old civil service system, Senate Republicans have voted to make it nearly impossible for Wisconsin residents and taxpayers to know what is being done in their name, why it is being done and who it is being done for," said Senator **Dave Hansen**
(D-Green Bay).

The Republican attack on civil service is not merely an attack on state employees, it is an attack on the very protections put in place to shield state employees and agencies from the political influence and pressures exerted on them that led to creation of civil service in the first place.

The inevitable result will be an increase in cronyism and corruption and the furthering of an

agenda that rewards wealthy friends and donors at the expense of average Wisconsin families.

Sen. **Jon Erpenbach** (D-Middleton) said the bill would allow supervisors to play favorites and return to a system of political patronage.

"Yes, this is going to open the door to corruption," Erpenbach said. "Yes, this is going to open the door to cronyism."

“Instead of dismantling the laws that have served Wisconsin taxpayers well by reducing the possibility of undue influence on their government, Senate Republicans should be focusing on the needs of Wisconsin families by working with Democrats to create good paying jobs, allowing people to refinance their student loans, fixing our roads and highways and addressing the coming retirement crisis,” concludes Hansen.

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Legislative writer Jay Wadd contributed to this story.