

Walker Turns Back on Pardons

Written by Lena Taylor, State Senator, 4th District
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MILWAUKEE - The Wisconsin Constitution states, "The governor shall have power to grant reprieves, commutations and pardons, after conviction..." Yet, the only person in the entire state who has the power to grant a pardon, Governor Scott Walker, has refused to do so. It is appalling that someone who has taken an oath to honor the constitution would deliberately evade their responsibilities as the leader of our state.

Republican Governor Tommy Thompson issued 148 pardons during his years in office. Democratic Governor Jim Doyle issued nearly 300 pardons. But it's not about how many people get a pardon. It's about the principle. The duty of the government is to serve its people first and foremost, and we cannot do that without first lending our ears. If we do not even listen to those who have served their sentence and repented their crimes, we deny them an opportunity for full rehabilitation and restoration of their citizenship.

I have recently introduced a bill to create an independent pardon council. This bill would create a panel of nine judges from around the state to consider each application for a pardon and make recommendations to the governor and the legislature. Although Walker has been neglectful to his people, this bill would allow hundreds to have their voice heard and allow them to get another chance.