Lame Duck GOP Proposals an Assault on Democracy

Written by Calab Frostman, State Senator District 1
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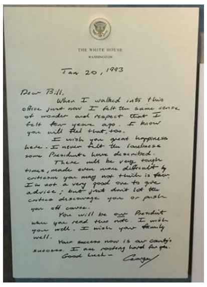
Peaceful Transition of Power and Will of the People Thwarted says Sen. Frostman.

MADISON - I’ve seen this letter many times before, but with the recent passing of George H.W. Bush fresh in our collective conscience, its words and its sentiment hold additional significance. This note symbolizes many of its author’s most admirable qualities – humility, deference, the capacity for self-reflection, and the full embrace and understanding that the will of the people is what advances our political agenda and thus our collective success. His note also demonstrates one of the most unique and precious traditions of the United States: the peaceful transfer of power, which was a novel concept when our country was founded.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Jan 20, 1993

Dear Bill,

When I walked into this office just now I felt the same sense of wonder and respect that I felt four years ago. I know you will feel that, too.

I wish you great happiness here. I never felt the loneliness some Presidents have described.

There will be very tough times, made even more difficult by criticism you may not think is fair. I'm not a very good one to give advice; but just don't let the critics discourage you or push you off course.

You will be our President when you read this note. I wish you well. I wish your family well.

Your success now is our country's success. I am rooting hard for you.

Good Luck – George

By this time, I am guessing that you have heard of five bills proposed by legislative Republicans meant to rig the system for their failed agenda in the aftermath of their election losses, as well as suppress future votes, even while acknowledging that their past voter suppression efforts have been ruled unconstitutional. All of their proposals are abhorrent abuses of power, but the most egregious of which include stripping the Attorney General of many of the office’s current powers, giving Republican legislators, not the incoming Governor, the authority to appoint a cabinet secretary, and moving a presidential primary (against the professional advice of more than half the state’s county clerks, Democrat and Republican, at a cost to taxpayers of more than $7 million) to enhance the chances of a Walker appointee getting elected to the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

Unlike the tradition of a peaceful transfer of power, and unlike President Bush’s humble words of encouragement to incoming President Clinton, the bills proposed by Speaker Vos and Leader Fitzgerald are hostile to democracy, display the petulance of children denied their third piece of birthday cake, and reek of supreme arrogance.

As Democrats and Republicans, we often differ on how to best distribute the tax burden, invest in our economy, our education system, and our environment. However, hastily changing the rules of the game in a lame duck session after a resounding defeat simply because you can and want to is neither a Democratic issue, nor a Republican issue; it is an issue of morality and integrity, and their proposals, if successful, harm our democracy by essentially canceling last month’s election results in which millions of Wisconsinites let their will be known.

If this unprecedented power grab has sickened and angered you, please call your Assembly representative, as well as Assembly Speaker Vos, Senate Majority Leader Fitzgerald, and Governor Walker’s offices to let them know that this aggression will not stand. Their contact information is below. For the sake of our democracy, I implore you to be vocal and persistent. If you are able, I would also encourage you to visit their offices in the Capitol today (Monday) and up until the final votes are cast.

Joel Kitchens, 1st Assembly District – 608-266-5350
Andre Jacque, 2nd Assembly District – 608-266-9870
Ron Tusler, 3rd Assembly District – 608-266-5831
Robin Vos, Assembly Speaker – 608-266-9171
Scott Fitzgerald, Senate Majority Leader – 608-266-5660
Scott Walker, Governor – 608-266-1212

There is a public hearing portion of the Joint Finance Committee slated to start at 12:30 p.m. today. Please let your voice be heard there, as well. If you are unable to join in person, hearings will be televised on www.wiseye.org.

If your Representatives do not vote against these measures and, just as importantly, speak out against this brazen attempt to cancel statewide election results, they are not worthy of serving as your legislators. Demand they vote these measures down. Thank you for your vigilance in protecting democracy in Wisconsin.

Forward,

Senator Caleb Frostman