

Walker, Republicans Want Return to Political Patronage in State Government

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Walker and GOP lawmakers want to eliminate the state's civil service exams and replace them with a subjective review of résumés. The current civil service system has kept qualified workers in taxpayer-funded jobs based upon merit for nearly 100 years, and kept out partisan political hacks.

MADISON - Just three days after ending his presidential run, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker sought to reassert his conservative credentials Thursday by backing a proposed overhaul of the state's civil service system for 30,000 employees. The move comes four years after repealing most collective bargaining for public employees.

Walker and two top Republican lawmakers are seeking to eliminate the state's civil service exams, replacing them with a subjective résumé-based evaluation system. They also propose to stop allowing longtime employees to avoid termination by "bumping" other workers with less seniority and shortening by more than half the process for employees to appeal their dismissal or discipline.

More than a century ago, good-government groups engineered the civil service system as a way to place qualified workers in taxpayer-funded jobs and weed out partisan hacks. It has been working well ever since, much to the disappointment of each new group of politicians coming to Madison who normally want to get their friends, family, and donors into state jobs.



In a statement released earlier today, Senate Democratic Leader **Jennifer Shilling** (D-La

Crosse) said of the move:

"The repeal of civil service protections is an invitation to more corruption in a Republican administration that continues to be plagued by scandals, cronyism and special interest influence. Rather than looking for ways to tear down Wisconsin workers, we should be focused on strengthening our middle class, boosting family wages and ensuring greater retirement security."



Assembly Democratic Leader **Peter Barca** (D-Kenosha) said:

"This is yet another politically motivated attack on hardworking state employees. It is especially concerning that this attack on our civil service system opens the door for corruption and cronyism during an Administration rife with scandals and charges of unethical conduct. Also, this once again violates a giant promise the Governor made during Act 10 that public employees would be protected by civil service."

The author was one of the chief architects of the civil service selection procedures implemented by the State of Wisconsin in the 1970s and 80s, and at one time ran the State's Civil Service Testing program.

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