

# Rep. Spreitzer: Advocates for good government, halt to last-minute legislating

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MADISON- Anticipating frenzied Senate and Assembly activity in Madison early next year, Rep. Mark Spreitzer (D-Beloit) introduced a bill today to bolster the legislative process. Spreitzer's proposal will better ensure full and deliberate consideration of proposals in both legislative chambers.

"In the past, the Senate and Assembly have rushed bills through public hearings and fast tracked bills in order to get them on jam packed floor calendars before the end of the legislative session," Rep. Spreitzer said. "Legislators have an obligation to represent our constituents to the best of our ability, but when the legislature tries to pass laws at high speed, not enough importance is placed on that duty."

Last year, the Assembly and Senate took up massive floor calendars to move numerous bills as quickly as possible and allow members to leave town for the year. In February 2016, the State Assembly considered 110 bills in a single day while the State Senate considered 47. Two days later, the Assembly scheduled an additional 88 bills and then adjourned, even though 10 full months remained in the year.

"When too many bills are pushed too quickly through poorly attended committee meetings and then onto a bloated floor calendar, the quality of legislating and representation suffers," Rep. Spreitzer added. "This is not how the Wisconsin legislature should do its business."

Rep. Spreitzer's bill proposes three common sense reforms:

1. Limit both the percentage of Assembly or Senate committees that can meet on any day or in any week, and the number of bills they can consider at any one meeting. This will allow legislators to attend the majority of their committee meetings and fully vet legislation.
2. Limit the number of bills that the Assembly or Senate can consider on any floor session day or in any session week so that legislators may adequately review all legislation they will be voting on.
3. Prohibits committees from holding an Executive Session the same day as a floor session for that house, so that legislators can focus their attention on the bills they will consider on the floor.

“There is a limit to the number of bills that the public, and their elected representatives, can adequately review in a day or in a week,” Rep. Spreitzer noted. “By spreading out our activity, we can take the time to talk to our constituents, allow them to digest issues, hear their concerns, and do our jobs properly.”

Rep. Spreitzer proposed this bill last session as 2015 Assembly Bill 965