

# Reps. Subeck, Berceau: GOP silencing voices of residents in Dane County towns

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**MADISON** – State Representatives Lisa Subeck and Terese Berceau today decried action by Republicans on the Assembly Committee on Local Government that significantly diminishes the ability of people living in towns in Dane County to have a say over whether or not their towns opt out of county zoning. Subeck is the ranking Democratic member on the committee.

“This is nothing more than a bait and switch move, pure and simple,” Subeck stated. “It completely flies in the face of promises Republicans made last session. They are literally changing the rules in the middle of the game because one realtor on a town board realized things might not go his way if town residents were actually allowed to have a say in the process.”

2015 Act 178 gave towns in Dane County, and no other county in the state, the option not to follow approved county zoning ordinances. That legislation specifically said town residents could hold a binding vote on withdrawing from county zoning, either at the annual town meeting or through a referendum during the regular spring or general election.

At least eight townships in Dane County currently have votes scheduled for their annual meetings next month on whether or not to opt out of county zoning. The committee action taken today would cancel those votes altogether.

“The *Washington Post* has a banner on its website that I think is entirely apropos to this situation: ‘Democracy Dies in Darkness,’ “ Berceau noted. “Frankly, this discriminatory

move seems designed to allow town boards in only Dane County to avoid the scrutiny and oversight of their residents. People living in towns in every other county in the state will still have the opportunity for binding votes on establishing town zoning.”

“This move establishes an unequal standard that abolishes the voices of town residents in Dane County alone and hands unprecedented, unilateral power to town boards. It creates a confusing, uncertain process for opting out of county zoning that impedes public participation,” Subeck said. “People who live in Dane County townships should not be treated like second-class citizens.”