

Kaul calls for universal background checks in inaugural remarks

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Dem Josh Kaul bemoaned the lame-duck laws, but called for implementing universal background checks after he was sworn in as attorney general this afternoon.

The former federal prosecutor said in his inaugural remarks that while the laws took away power from the AG's and gov's offices, "the priorities of the Wisconsin Department of Justice are changing" with his election.

Kaul also pledged to push for implementing universal background checks and a "red flag law" that would allow family members to ask a court to order the removal of an individual's firearms.

State Supreme Court Chief Justice Pat Roggensack administered the oath of office to Kaul and the other statewide elected officials today at the Capitol.

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That includes Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, who highlighted the "gravity of the moment" as he was sworn in as the first African American to hold the office.

He also said he and the new administration are ready to usher in an "entirely new chapter for state of Wisconsin, focused on justice and fairness for all."

And he stressed the need to expand clean drinking water across the state, to "make sure opportunities exist" and other priorities.

"A person's zip code should never determine their destiny," he said.

Meanwhile, state Treasurer Sarah Godlewski and Secretary of State Doug La Follette called for bipartisanship in their addresses.

Godlewski stressed the “need to achieve a new level of accountability and a new level of responsibility” in the state and said the days of “neglect” of her office are over.

And she highlighted the need to work together to advance the state, noting tax dollars aren’t red or blue, but “green and gold.”

La Follette called for returning to “our state’s progressive tradition” by working together during the session, as he expressed optimism the Legislature would work on issues including health care and education.