

Rep. Spreitzer: Proposes lame duck limits

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MADISON – Today, State Representative Mark Spreitzer (D – Beloit) and State Senator Janis Ringhand (D – Evansville) introduced a constitutional amendment that would limit the scope of future lame duck sessions.

“Less than one month after the 2018 November elections, a lame duck session fundamentally changed the balance of power in Wisconsin state government. Online, in person, and via official correspondence, legislators heard the citizens of our state reject this partisan maneuver, and the outgoing legislature set a poor example for the years to come,” explained Rep. Spreitzer. “The lame duck session is so broadly disliked that even now – two months later – the most recent Marquette Law School Poll shows that our citizens disapprove of those actions by an almost two to one margin.”

The proposed constitutional amendment would ensure that our state will never see such a divisive process again. It provides a set of simple, narrow limits regarding the types of bills that may be passed between a November general election and the following year. This amendment prohibits changes to the powers and duties of statewide constitutional officers, judicial branch judges and justices, the legislature, any state agency, or any other public entity created by law. It also prohibits changes to the date of judicial branch elections, changes to the jurisdiction of the Wisconsin Supreme Court or any appeals or circuit court, or changes to the composition of any state agency or other public entity created by law.

“I have heard from Wisconsinites of both parties who think that the lame duck session was wrong. This amendment will make sure that it never happens again,”

said Sen. Ringhand.

This constitutional amendment is narrowly tailored to allow the state to take any critically needed action that might arise from natural disasters or other unforeseen events. It ensures that the will of Wisconsin's voters will not be thwarted before it can come into full effect - without hindering the normal course of business. Any changes to the way that state government is run should be implemented through a considered and thoughtful process that gives ample time for public input and evaluation.

"I hope that our colleagues will join us and send a clear signal to our citizens that the legislature has heard their disapproval and is ready to begin governing in a calm, considered, and bipartisan manner," Spreitzer concluded.