

# Rep. Vining: Defends colleague Rep. Anderson

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MADISON - Since near the beginning of the 2019-2020 Legislative Session, State Representative Jimmy Anderson (D-Fitchburg) and members of Assembly Democratic Leadership have asked Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester) to approve accommodations for Rep. Anderson to participate in committee hearings by phone. Speaker Vos has denied these accommodations. State Representative Robyn Vining (D-Wauwatosa) issued the following statement in support of Rep. Anderson:

“In defense of our colleague, Representative Jimmy Anderson, and in partnership with every Wisconsinite with a disability who will ever seek elected office on both sides of the aisle and deserve to be seen as equal, we as a Democratic caucus wholly object to the Speaker’s response to the request made by Rep. Anderson. The truth is this has been an ongoing issue throughout this year.

“In public statements, Speaker Vos has mischaracterized the situation. The truth is Rep. Anderson has been sitting patiently for months, without accommodations. And we, as Democrats, will continue to fight for his accommodations so that he may represent his people. It’s the right thing to do.

“Rep. Anderson and I serve on the Assembly Health Committee together. There are days his disability precludes him from being with us. On those days, on behalf of the state of Wisconsin, I sense the loss of his feedback and questions because he is a valuable member of the Health Committee. He has a perspective that is important to the process in that committee.

“Speaker Vos has demeaned remote involvement by Rep. Anderson. However, I’d argue that the public who is, like Rep. Anderson, unable to travel to testify, might

feel more seen and heard and more represented by someone who understands their challenges. Silencing the voices of people with disabilities is a horrifying path to travel. The Speaker needs to change course. This is unacceptable.

“Thank you for calling and emailing us. We hear you. And we will continue to fight for what is right. Now, call the office of Speaker Vos at 608-266-3387.”