

WisDems: File federal lawsuit over Republicans' lame-duck power grab

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Contact: Courtney Beyer, courtneyb@wisdems.org

MADISON — The Democratic Party of Wisconsin today filed a lawsuit in federal court to stop the unprecedented and illegal laws passed by Republicans during December's lame-duck session. The laws, which stripped Governor Tony Evers and Attorney General Josh Kaul of their traditional powers shortly after they were elected, are being challenged under the United States Constitution's Guarantee Clause, the First Amendment, and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Plaintiffs from each congressional district in Wisconsin are also part of the federal lawsuit, which alleges that the lame-duck laws are invalid because they effectively blunted the results of the 2018 election by taking away traditional executive powers from the governor and attorney general only after a Democrat was elected to those posts, and because the only purpose of the lame-duck laws was to retaliate against Democratic voters for exercising their right to vote, to discourage them from mobilizing in the future, and to deny Democratic voters the same treatment their votes would receive if they belonged to another party.

"Not only did Republicans ignore the will of the people when they passed these laws, they also denied voters their core constitutional rights," said Martha Laning, chair of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. "These eight plaintiffs voted for Democratic leadership because they wanted to see progressive reforms enacted. By rushing through legislation with the explicit intent of denying the implementation of Democratic ideas, they violated the U.S. Constitution's promise of principled state government, freedom of speech, and equal protection under the law."

“The Democratic Party of Wisconsin is taking legal action today because we refuse to allow these unconstitutional acts to stand. The will of the people is the law of the land, and it’s about time Republicans respected that,” added Laning.

The case, *DPW v. Vos et al.*, was filed in the United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin.

Holwell Shuster & Goldberg LLP partner [Vincent Levy](#), along with associates [Kevin Benish](#) and [Timothy Grinsell](#), are representing the plaintiffs.

Plaintiff 1, Colleen Robson from East Troy, is an educator who voted for Gov. Evers because of his commitment to eliminate future corporate giveaways like the Foxconn agreement.

Plaintiff 2, Alexia Sabor from Madison, is an activist who voted for Gov. Evers because of his pro-environment agenda and his commitment to health care.

Plaintiff 3, Pete Klitzke from La Crosse, is a retired former university employee who voted for Gov. Evers due to his commitment to veterans and health care.

Plaintiff 4, DJ Hoestettler from Cudahy, is a musician who voted for Gov. Evers because of his commitment to reforming the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation and eliminating unnecessary and costly “voter ID” restrictions.

Plaintiff 5, Denis Degenhardt from the City of West Bend, voted for Gov. Evers and Attorney General Kaul because of their commitment to withdraw Wisconsin from federal lawsuits seeking to overturn the Affordable Care Act.

Plaintiff 6, Marcia Steele from Oshkosh, is a health care worker who voted for Gov. Evers because of his promise to expand Medicaid in Wisconsin.

Plaintiff 7, Nancy Stencil from Wausau, is a mobile crisis professional and the chairperson of the Marathon County Democratic Party. She voted for Gov. Evers and A.G. Kaul because of their commitment to expand healthcare and improve voting access.

Plaintiff 8, Lindsey Dorff from Green Bay, is a stay-at-home mom and former educator who voted for Gov. Evers because of his plan to increase investment in early childhood education.