

# Rep. Milroy: Disappointed with partisan approach to sporting heritage

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As an avid outdoorsman and hunter, I am extremely disappointed that my Republican colleagues neglected to work on their newly introduced *Wisconsin Sporting Freedom Package* in a way that was bipartisan, transparent, or inclusive. It is apparent that the process of introducing these bills was motivated by partisan politics rather than a true desire to expand and enhance Wisconsin's sporting heritage.

Rather than work closely with Wisconsin sporting groups that are directly affected by this bill package, Republicans chose to introduce their *Wisconsin Sporting Freedom Package* with a national group. This national group is run by a former GOP staffer and Republican operative that was involved in a scandal related to a DNR grant program during his tenure at the Wisconsin State Capitol.

In addition, the Republican Co-Chairs of the bipartisan Wisconsin Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus introduced this bill package without so much as a courtesy call or email to the Democratic Co-Chairs of the caucus, of which I am one. Despite also being a member of the Department of Natural Resources' Sporting Heritage Council, the ranking Democrat on the Assembly Committee on Sporting Heritage, and a legislator who has tried countless times to work with my Republican colleagues on sporting heritage issues, I sadly heard nothing about this package of bills ahead of time.

This session I handed over two sporting heritage bills that I authored to Republican

colleagues with the understanding that they would introduce them to ensure their passage. One of the bills would create a free fishing weekend for Wisconsin veterans, the other would allow individuals to hunt a wild animal with an airbow or airgun in a season open to hunting that animal with a firearm. Several months later, these bills remain stagnant in their offices. I gave my legislative proposals to Republicans for introduction because – let’s face it – that’s the best way your legislation will get passed with this Republican majority that operates on partisan maneuvers. I did this in good faith believing I could trust my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

Wisconsin’s sporting heritage is a rich part of Wisconsin’s culture with a significantly positive impact on the economic development of the state, specifically in northwestern Wisconsin. It’s imperative that we continue to work towards ensuring our state’s pristine beauty and sporting heritage for future generations. But we need to do it in an inclusive, bipartisan manner. Wisconsin voters deserve better than the current partisan practices of the majority party.